

City achieves Sustainable Jersey silver recertification

CAPE MAY — Cape May has once again achieved Sustainable Jersey silver recertification. Municipalities that earn this certification are considered by their peers, state government, experts and civic organizations to be among the leading communities in the state. Only 23 of 460 participating municipalities achieved silver-level certification in 2021.

Additionally, Cape May has earned the Sustainability Champion Award for small-population (up to 4,999) municipalities. The award recognizes the municipality that has achieved the highest number of points. This will be the fifth time that Cape May has received the Sustainability Champion Award.

Cape May was honored at the Sustainable Jersey Awards Luncheon in Atlantic City.

"I would like to thank our Green Team who committed to making Cape May City one of the most sustainable communities in New Jersey," Mayor Zach Mullock said. "This award is a testament to the important milestones the City achieved to make the Nation's Oldest

Seashore Resort a model for other communities to emulate."

To become certified at the silver level, the city submitted documentation to show it had completed a balance of the required sustainability actions, meeting a minimum of 350 action points. In addition to reaching 350 points, each community had to create a green team and select at least three out of 12 priority action options.

"This level of achievement takes a village," Mullock said. "Thanks to the hard work of the Green Team and the support of our residents

and City Council, Cape May has once again demonstrated that it continues to be a leader in sustainability."

All facets of city government contributed to this effort. Cape May was recognized for establishing a Cre-

ative Team and conducting a Creative Assets Inventory, which provides a snapshot of its cultural resources. City Council adopted a Green Purchasing Policy and received points for its Community Forestry Management

Plan. The Planning Board adopted the Creative Placemaking Plan as part of the city's master plan and the Environmental Commission played a key role by conducting outreach and education on a number of key issues.

Lower to buy body, vehicle cameras

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council on Monday approved the purchase of 63 body cameras and 16 in-vehicle cameras for the police department.

The township is buying the cameras through a state cooperative purchasing program from Axon Enterprise in the amount of \$277,560.

According to township Chief Financial Officer Lauren Reed, there are sufficient funds in the budget coming from two grants plus monies left over from four ordinances.

Deputy Mayor David Perry said the township received \$124,318 from the state Attorney General's Office toward the purchase of the body cameras.

Perry said the township

also received \$115,000 toward the purchase of the in-vehicle cameras from the American Rescue Plan Act, which provided \$130 billion to local governments.

The five-year contract for cameras includes an extended warranty and 10 GB of video storage.

As of June 1, all uniformed police officers in New Jersey were required to wear body cameras.

Township boosts beach access in Villas

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Although most streets in Villas end at the beach, it wasn't always easy for residents and visitors to get down to the sandy stand.

"About four or five years ago there was really no township beach access in the Villas," Councilman Tom Conrad said.

The township now has 26 beach access points in Villas, he said, plus 12 additional privately owned

paths. Steps were built down to the beach at some paths, Conrad said.

Deputy Mayor David Perry said council received a report of inspections of beach access paths in Villas from Emergency Management Director Ed Donohue, Public Works Superintendent Gary Douglas and Township Manager Mike Laffey.

The state Department of Environmental Protection requires the beach paths to be inspected every five years for the township

to retain its beach maintenance permit, Perry said.

The township's contracted engineer also participated in the inspections, he said.

A number of beach paths were widened to 6 feet. The project used a soil aggregate called I-5, which is comprised of angular-shaped sand, silt and clay particles and can be compacted much easier than beach sand.

Split-rail fencing was placed on either side of the paths.

State ready

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testing laboratories

Applications for Class 5 retailers will be accepted online beginning at 9 a.m. March 15.

Brown said applicants can choose which type of license to apply for based on their readiness to begin cannabis operations.

A conditional license is a

provisional license pursuant to an abbreviated application process that gives applicants more time to get property or municipal approval.

An annual license allows applicants to begin operations after passing CRC inspections. Brown said conditional licenses would be prioritized over annual applications. Conditional license holders, if approved, would have as long as 5.5 months to apply to convert to the annual license via a conditional conversion application.

He said a conditional license applicant does not need site control or municipal approval.

"We do ask they have an identified site but that can change in the conditional license application phase," Brown said.

Annual licenses must undergo a full application process and require site control and municipal approval, he said.

Only license-holders with an annual license, either through a conditional conversion application or an annual license application, will be legally able to cultivate, produce, manufacture, transfer or dispense cannabis and cannabis items, Brown said.

Two business sizes are available. Microbusinesses are those with 10 employees or fewer, 2,500 square feet of facility space and that can possess 1,000 pounds of cannabis per month or 1,000 cannabis plants.

The standard cannabis business would not be subject to the microbusiness limits.

Priority among applications is social equity business applicants, then diversely owned business applicants, then impact zone business applicants and then those who receive bonus points for collective bargaining agreements, project labor agreements or residency. Brown said microbusiness applications would be considered before standard applications.

An applicant may qualify as a social equity business by living in an economi-

cally disadvantaged area for five of the last 10 years and income requirements of being under 80 percent of the median household income or the majority of the ownership of the license applicant must have a prior cannabis-related conviction such as two or more disorderly persons or misdemeanor offenses or one felony or indictable offense related to cannabis. No municipality in Cape May County is named as an economically disadvantaged area.

Lower Township is designated by the state as an impact zone. For priority consideration, the proposed business would need to locate in an impact zone, or if the license applicant lives or has lived in an impact zone for three or more years or at least 25 percent of the employees live in an impact zone, according to Brown.

Applications deemed complete and compliant will receive full points when being scored while incomplete applications will receive no points and be rejected with an opportunity to complete and resubmit.

Brown said the CRC expects to receive a high volume of applications. The commission has 90 days to review applications but can extend that time period, something the CRC anticipates at the outset, he said.

Applicants must submit a personal history disclosure form or entity disclosure form, which will be available on the CRC website prior to the application period. All applications must be made online.

Brown said a dashboard will be available online allowing applicants to check on the status of their license applications.

Cannabis businesses will not be allowed to operate under a different name as in "doing business as."

"Per our regulations, DBAs are prohibited. Cannabis businesses are required to be advertised and operating under the name of the business itself," Brown said.

COVID

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& Johnson vaccines are available from 1 to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 8, at the Avalon Community Center, 3001 Avalon Ave.

The county Department of Health has administered 23,598 doses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 72,817 Cape May County residents have received at least one vaccine dose and 62,651 have been fully vaccinated. The CDC also reports that 68 percent of the county's population is fully vaccinated.

"These winter months when temperatures make it difficult to be outside are challenging," said Cape May County Commissioner

Jeff Pierson, liaison to the Cape May County Department of Health. "I remind residents to take the necessary steps to protect themselves and their families. We are so proud of the high vaccination rate our county has and we believe this is helping to prevent many people from needing to go to the hospital."

Cape May County has recorded 13,146 COVID-19 cases during the pandemic, 12,440 of which are now off quarantine. More details on daily reported case numbers can be found at capemaycountynj.gov.

For more information on obtaining the vaccine, quickly and free of charge, visit capemaycountynj.gov or call (609) 465-1187.

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