

# Cape May Star and Wave

160TH YEAR NO. 47 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014 75¢



## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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## HOLDEN SHOTS, SCORES FULL SCHOLARSHIP

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## Lower urges rejection of school ballot

### Leaders encourage voters to turn out, bring friends

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — “Make sure you get out and vote ‘no,’” Mayor Michael Beck advised Monday night concerning a Dec. 9 ballot question.

A special election for the three municipalities that comprise the Lower Cape May Regional High School District will be held Dec. 9, with polls open from 2 to 9 p.m. The single ballot question asks whether Cape May should be allowed to leave the school district.

Beck described it as an election in a vacuum since there was a single item on the ballot.

“You need to go out and not only vote, but you need to bring anybody you know,” he said. “This will be of significant damage to this town and its education system if somehow Cape May was able to withdraw from the regional district.”

He said if Cape May withdraws from the school district, Lower Township property owners would see an annual tax increase in the hundreds of dollars.

“There has to be a massive amount of people coming from every neighborhood of every corner of this town that will vote ‘no,’” Beck said.

It’s in the best interest of West Cape May residents to vote “no” because they would bear a disproportionate share of the tax increase if Cape May were allowed to withdraw, he said. Beck said the only winners would be property owners in Cape May.

He said voters cannot sit back because the vote on the last ballot question was 82 percent “no.”

During public comment, Ed Butler, a member of the Lower Township Taxpayers Association, said the organization had printed signs and literature advising voters to vote “no.” He said two wards in the township voted against the Nov. 4 ballot question but a number of voters in Ward One voted in favor of changing the regional school funding formula to one based on enrollment rather than property values.

First Ward Councilman Tom Conrad said some voted yes “because they didn’t like the messenger,” referring to a recorded rebroadcast made by Beck to every voter in the township before the election advising a “no” vote. Conrad

said he told everyone he knew to vote against the change in the funding formula.

Beck said without conducting a survey of voters, it is impossible to determine what went wrong in Ward One. He said some voters were confused by the question.

Conrad said some voters believed if the funding formula were changed, the two school districts would merge in Lower Township.

“It’s not on the ballot,” he said. “People have to understand this is a “no” vote.”

Butler said if Cape May withdraws from the regional school district, he would see his property taxes rise by \$1,000 per year.

Beck said Gaiss Market in Villas was turned into a “vote no center,” with signs and handouts given to shoppers. He said Butler stood in front of St. Raymond’s Church for 14 hours with a “vote no” sign.

Taxpayers Association member Janet Pitts said it was a question of voting “no” in Lower Township or property owners would see their taxes significantly increase.

## Cape May schedules meeting on ballot

### Information will be provided on withdrawal bid

CAPE MAY — The city will hold a special meeting featuring a roundtable discussion on the topic of the Dec. 9 special election ballot question of allowing Cape May to withdraw from the Lower Cape May Regional School District.

The meeting is scheduled for at 1 p.m. Friday, Nov. 21, at Cape May Convention Hall.

“We will answer any questions or concerns that you have,” said Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman, who will be chairing the meeting.

A representative of the law firm Cape May hired to bring about a withdrawal from the school district or change in the funding formula will speak at the meeting, Wichterman said.

## Sun shines on ‘Old Brick’



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Cold Spring Presbyterian Church, known as ‘Old Brick,’ built in 1823, shines in the afternoon sun framed by orange autumn leaves. This was, of course, prior to the torrential rains that struck the area Monday.

## Murphy appointed to Lower MUA

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — In a 3-2 vote along party lines Monday, Lower Township Council appointed William Murphy to fill a vacant commissioner’s seat on the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority (MUA).

Council’s three independents — Mayor Michael Beck, Deputy Mayor Norris Clark and Councilman James Neville — voted for Murphy, while

the two Republican councilmen — Tom Conrad and Erik Simonsen — voted against the appointment. Simonsen nominated Jackie Henderson, who filled the unexpired term of Third Ward Councilman Glenn Douglass in 2013 for a few weeks.

Commissioner Jack Sparks resigned from the MUA following a sweep by Republicans in the Nov. 4 election, creating the open seat.

Conrad requested filling the vacancy be tabled until

council changes after the first of January. He cited Beck’s past comments of not making changes until a new council is seated.

“Council continues its business, council is still in session,” Beck said.

Clark nominated Murphy for the vacant seat.

“We need for the MUA board someone who understands water and sewer,” Clark said. “Someone who is not political, is not going over there with a political agenda,

just over there to solve problems and help the MUA get on track.”

He said Murphy would let council and residents decide the best way for the MUA to proceed. Clark said Murphy has a degree from New York state, holds a Professional Engineer’s license and certificates from Rutgers University in water treatment. He said Murphy worked for many years at Brooklyn Union Gas and New York City water supply pipeline and substation.

## County rejects Cape May Point’s request for open space funding

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — The county Open Space and Farmland Preservation Board rejected the Cape May Popint’s application for funding to create a natural area off Cape Avenue at the borough’s entrance.

The triangular-shaped property was subdivided into three lots between Cape Avenue and West Lake Drive.

At a Nov. 13 Borough Commission meeting, Commissioner Robert Moffatt said the owner of the property was willing to sell the three lots as open space. He said the property would have been used to aid monarch

butterfly migration “almost like a miniature arboretum.” It was hoped that students would use the property for nature walks.

Moffatt said state Sen. Jeff Van Drew and Assemblyman Robert Andrzejczak, D-Cape May, Cumberland, Atlantic, visited the borough during monarch butterfly migration. He said the legislators wrote a letter to the county Open Space and Farmland Preservation Board in support of the borough’s continuing effort to preserve open space, knowing the borough’s previous application had been declined.

“Unfortunately, the response to

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## Shhh! West Cape May OKs noise ordinance

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Borough Commission approved an ordinance addressing noise from construction, demolition, loud motor vehicles and multiuse properties. To enforce the new noise ordinance, the borough will need to purchase a decibel meter and have an employee trained and certified in its operation as a noise-control officer.

At a Nov. 12 meeting, Mayor Pamela Kaithern said the ordinance was created using a state noise ordinance. She said it would allow the borough to have an enforceable noise ordinance.

Kaithern said the next step would be to have someone certified as a noise-control officer.

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