



House of the week

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Singer-songwriter event brings noted musicians to area

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Dune project could move homes out of V zone

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — A proposed project to build sand dunes on Lower Township beaches from Cox Hall Creek to the end of Villas could move homes in that area out of the V flood zone, potentially saving them money on flood insurance.

Lower Township Council passed a resolution during a special meeting March 9 authorizing an application to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for beneficial use of

dredge materials, a \$65 million project.

Councilman Tom Conrad said if the project comes to fruition, it would take homes in Villas out of the V zone on Federal Emergency Management Agency maps.

Councilman David Perry noted the project would extend from Cox Hall Creek north through Villas.

“My understanding is it will virtually take everybody out of the V zone,” he said.

In addition, council approved award of an “extraordinary un-

specified service contract” without public bidding to Stewart Farrell of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey Coastal Research Center for an Army Corps Pilot Program grant application. Farrell’s contract is not to exceed \$6,000.

Lower Township Planning Director Bill Galestock told the Star and Wave the berm would reach 16 feet high from sea level. The sand could come from dredging in the shipping channel of Delaware Bay or dredge material near the

Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal, he said.

Galestock said it could take two to four years for the project to begin. The Army Corps refers to the program as storm damage reduction/habitat enhancement using dredge material.

“It’s a program to look at ways they could use the dredge material,” he said. “They have been putting it out in Delaware Bay in a certain area.”

He said the Army Corps is seeking a way to use the material and

benefit the coastal communities. Lower Township has not been held to the specifications of the final FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map. Galestock said the township expects a new map by 2022. The township would submit a letter of map revision to FEMA after the dune was built. As a protective dune, it would move the V zone out into the bay, he said.

The township is seeking funding through two types of grants for the

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2018 budget seeks 1-cent tax rate hike

Cape May attributes half to Sheehan’s settlement

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city introduced its 2018 municipal budget seeking a 1-cent increase in the local purpose tax rate, with half the proposed increase attributed to the city’s share of an \$800,000 settlement with former police chief Robert Sheehan.

If adopted as proposed, the municipal tax rate would increase from 34 cents per \$100 of assessed value to 35 cents.

Prior to City Council’s approval of the settlement, which cost the city \$440,000 and the Joint Insurance Fund \$360,000, the proposed tax rate increase was a half-cent. In addition, the budget was amended to raise the anticipated surplus figure

by \$170,000, according to City Manager Neil Young. During a City Council meeting March 6, Young said those two items — a tax increase of \$146,000 and a \$170,000 surplus increase — would cover cost of the legal settlement.

“We had some flexibility in the legal line (item) to cover the rest of that,” he said.

The city had \$4.5 million in surplus funds and applied \$2.8 million to the 2018 budget, leaving \$1.7 million as a remaining balance, according to auditor Leon Costello.

“We’re in very good shape. We’re in better shape than last year even though we’re using a lot more surplus,” he said.

The proposed budget would use \$520,000 more

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John Cooke/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Calm between the storms

Mother Nature gave Cape May a respite from stormy weather March 10 and 11 with sunny skies and temperatures in the 40s before the expected arrival of the third nor’easter in 10 days.

City will hold series of meetings to solicit public input on future

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — As the city prepares to re-examine its master plan, a number of meetings, along with an on-line survey, will be held to solicit input from the public.

During a Planning Board meeting Feb. 27, Master Plan Advisory Committee Chairman Harry Bellangy said the committee was promoting broad involvement of the community through meetings and mailings. He said the committee was first looking to the city’s various commissions and advisory committees as a test of what kind of information should

be aggregated for the Planning Board.

“The feeling of the committee is very few people actually understand what a master plan is, what it does, what its purpose is,” Bellangy said, adding that a goal was to present that information to the public in town hall-type meetings.

Bellangy said the committee was reaching out to organizations in the community such as the Village Green Association and Victorian Towers residents.

“We’ve been looking at the idea of using Convention Hall and setting up essentially stations so that this person will talk to this group

and not have everybody just in a huge area, make it a little more personal to add a little more involvement,” Bellangy said.

Committee Vice Chairman John Van de Vaarst said the committee was finalizing dates for a town hall meeting in mid-April to discuss the master plan.

Board engineer Craig Hurlless said the town hall meeting would explain the process of updating the master plan and make the public feel they are part of the process. Discussion could include Cape May’s assets and liabilities and how the

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City may pay to ‘optimize’ HVAC at Convention Hall

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city’s engineering firm is proposing a facility evaluation of Convention Hall, in particular the building’s heating and air conditioning systems.

During a City Council meeting March 6, city engineer Tom Thornton, of Mott MacDonald, said council could authorize the firm to prepare an evaluation of Convention Hall that would include an inspection and survey of the existing heating and air conditioning system, calculations to verify the system sizing and

review the operation and maintenance procedures. He said his firm would have proposals to council prior to its next meeting.

Councilwoman Patricia Hendricks asked Thornton if it was normal to conduct such an evaluation of a relatively new building. Convention Hall opened just six years ago.

“No, that would not be typical,” Thornton replied. But the systems have had problems in the past.

The city spent \$21,000 in 2016 repairing Convention Hall’s heating and air conditioning systems and \$49,288 in 2017, Buildings and Property Committee

Chairman Bob Elwell said Dec. 19. He said the city is also spending \$200 per month for glycol treatments for the systems.

Unconfirmed reports stated the air conditioning units on the roof were not coated when installed affecting the aluminum coils, he said. Mold was treated in one of the building’s dressing rooms.

Thornton said it was likely Mott MacDonald would recommend third-party technicians and experts conduct a study of the system and present their recommendations on how to “tweak the system, basically to optimize its function.”

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