



**House of the week**  
Real Estate Resource



**Siberian tiger Rocky dies at county zoo**  
Page A8



## HPC, Zoning Board hash out differences

More meetings necessary before solutions can be agreed upon

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — For the past decade, the Zoning Board has overturned every decision by the city's Historic Preservation Commission sent to it on appeal from applicants.

To address that issue, a joint meeting of representatives of the HPC, planning and zoning boards was held June 21.

"HPC, based on our experience, based on our annual training, based on individual surveys and then based on our standards and in the absence of the standard, based on the Secretary of the Interior's stan-

dards, we use all of this information to make a decision as to accepting or rejecting, or in fact frequently recommending, modifications to the applicant," HPC Chairman Warren Coupland said.

He said the HPC is responsible for approval of exterior alterations to existing buildings in the historic district and to key and contributing buildings outside the historic district. The HPC also is responsible for new construction in the historic district, Coupland said.

"It must have HPC approval before a Certificate of Appropriateness and then finally a building permit is issued," he said. "Any

demolition in the historic district must meet a rigorous nine-point approval process before being permitted."

He said in those capacities, the HPC is regulatory and a building permit cannot be issued by the construction official until a Certificate of Appropriateness has been approved by the HPC. A Certificate of Occupancy will not be issued by the construction office until the project is in conformity to the Certificate of Appropriateness, Coupland said.

He said there seemed to be a single issue that has kept the HPC, planning and zoning boards from a "team effort" of protecting the city

as National Historic Landmark: the appeal process.

Member Bill Murray said the Zoning Board has the power to hear and decide appeals where it is alleged by the applicant there was an error in any order or decision by the HPC.

HPC Solicitor Robert Fineberg said all three boards were given their authority by land use law with different functions. He said Cape May's HPC was created in 1991. Members are appointed to the zoning and planning boards, he said, then they begin an education process. Fineberg said the HPC is a reverse process.

"You have an education process that has already taken place, because before you can be a member of the HPC, you have to have demonstrated an interest and competency on fields such as architectural history or local history," he said.

Fineberg said land use law recognizes there may not be enough of those people in the city with those qualifications, so residents of other towns can serve on the HPC. The guidelines of the HPC are the federal Secretary of the Interior guidelines, he said.

See Differences, Page A3



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

### History repeating itself

A carriage turns past the John McCreary House, aka The Abbey, on Monday in Cape May. While this scene is from 2017, the corner of Columbia Avenue and Gurney Street looked much the same when the home was built in 1869.

## City to take over fire inspections

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council introduced an ordinance June 20 in a 3-1 vote to take back fire inspections from the state, which for the past decade has placed burdensome requirements on owners of historic bed and breakfast inns. A Bureau of Fire Prevention would be created in Cape May rather than require firefighters to conduct the inspections.

As far back as 2008, bed and breakfast (B&B) inn owners stated fire inspectors from the state Department of Community Affairs demanded changes to their buildings that were hugely expensive or would destroy the historical integrity of their inns. Some B&B owners sold their inns or converted them to whole-house rentals.

Elan Zingman-Leith, a preservationist and owner of a historic inn, said when the city handled fire inspections they went

more smoothly and more fairly than when the state conducted inspections.

"We've had good state inspectors, too, but we've also had terrible state inspectors who were not reasonable, not pleasant," he said.

Zingman-Leith said one city inspector was not particularly pleasant but most times city inspections went more smoothly. He said B&Bs had to fight to stay in business due to state inspections a decade ago.

"There are fewer than half as many B&Bs as there used to be in Cape May," he said. "We used to have 64 and now we have about 30. It's incredibly changed from a decade ago."

Part of the cause of B&Bs being sold was state fire inspections but also good market prices for inns a buyer may want to turn into a private home, Zingman-Leith said.

He said state fire inspectors a decade ago

See Inspections, A7

## Beach Drive, Douglass Park closed July 3

NORTH CAPE MAY — Due to the amount of foot traffic that will be present on Beach Drive for the Fireworks Festival on July 3, Lower Township police will close Beach Drive to all vehicular and bicycle traffic from Townbank Road to Lincoln Boulevard in North Cape May from 3 p.m. until the conclusion of the event at about 11 p.m. Freeman Douglass Jr. Memorial Park will be closed at 10 p.m. July 2 and reopened July 4.

There will be no parking along Beach Drive from 2 p.m. until midnight July 3 to allow for the setup

and cleanup of vendors' merchandise.

The last block of Washington Boulevard from Atlantic Avenue to Beach Drive will be posted "No Parking" from 10 a.m. July 2 until July 4 to allow for the setup and breakdown of several amusement rides that will be erected in that area. Vendors and amusement rides will stay open until about 10 p.m. July 3.

Motorists are warned not to block driveways, fire hydrants or intersections. Illegally parked vehicles will be ticketed and towed.

There will be ample

parking throughout North Cape May. Handicapped parking will be available on Holmes Avenue between Atlantic Avenue and Beach Drive and also along Townbank Road between Fairview Road and Beach Drive.

In the event there are lost children, parents or guardians are directed to report the to the nearest police officer, who will advise the Police Command Center at Lincoln Boulevard and Beach Drive.

In the event of rain, the event will be rescheduled for July 5, with the same closings and restrictions, according to police.

## Bike paths in Lower, Middle slated to be linked up Aug. 1

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Construction to connect the bicycle paths in Lower and Middle townships is under way, with an expected completion date of Aug. 1.

During a Lower Township Council meeting June 19, Township Manager Jim Ridgway said crews were preparing the path for asphalt. He said bike riders would be able to ride the path from Route 109 in Cold Spring to the Cape

May County Park and Zoo in Cape May Court House.

Paving is complete from Satt Boulevard along Railroad Avenue behind Walmart in Middle Township south to Church Road in Middle Township. No paving has been undertaken along vineyards on Seashore Road. A water obstacle to the path, just north of the Pantry One store, has been fixed with the installation of a culvert.

In other business, repair to fenders on the bridge in West Cape May crossing the Cape

May Canal was scheduled to begin in July and continue into August, Ridgway said.

Due to a delay, the project will not get under way until after Labor Day. He said lane closings on the bridge would not be necessary initially but in September, when work will be undertaken on the foundation, one lane would be closed for various periods of time.

Councilman David Perry said the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freehold-

See Bike paths, Page A5



# WASHINGTON INN

Open Daily at 5 PM

THE WINE BAR  
Five for Friday

\$5

glasses of wine  
appetizers specials