

# Dock Mike's demolishes former 7-Eleven for expansion

By **JOHN ALVAREZ**  
Special to the Star and Wave  
and **JACK FICHTER**  
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Oh thank heaven, there's no more 7-Eleven on the corner of Broadway and Sunset Boulevard.

Neighboring Dock Mike's Pancake House purchased the property and demolished the former 7-Eleven store that became an eyesore once signage had been removed. Demolition began May 15. Empty fixtures and fluorescent light tubes have dominated the appearance of the former convenience store.

The West Cape May Planning Board tabled an application for site plan approval at its May 12 meeting from Dock Mike's.

Attorney Tony Monzo asked the board to reschedule the hearing for a May 26 work

session meeting.

Board Solicitor Brock Russell said an issue existed whether adequate notice was not given of all the relief needed by the applicant. He said Dock Mike's did not ask for any specific variances.

Russell said there was a variance that should have been noticed to residents residing within 200 feet of the former 7-Eleven.

Monzo said the site would need limited grading and cleanup following demolition without any detailed site work, which would be the subject of a site plan application to the Planning Board. He said the applicant wanted to take care of that before Memorial Day.

On May 14, the borough's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) met to consider two applications for Dock Mike's. The HPC approved demolition.

The second application dealt with Dock Mike's proposed expansion of the restaurant onto the former 7-11 property so there could be an increase in size of an existing wood deck and the parking lot. A 6-foot-high wood fence would be constructed to separate Dock Mike's parking lot from its neighbor's property, the Black Duck restaurant.

A photo of how the property exists was passed around among all members. Blueprints were then given to the members of the HPC showing the current layout of the property as well as the new additions to the property ranging from the deck, parking spaces, the privacy fence and a bike rack. Questions were asked, mainly if the proposed designs will ensure everything will be far enough away from neighbors.

All design improvements to the building and property were



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The former 7-Eleven at the corner of Broadway and Sunset Boulevard in West Cape May was demolished to make way for a parking lot at Dock Mike's Pancake House.

found to be appropriate to the historic district. HPC Chairman Elan Zing-

nan-Leith proposed a resolution whereas 110 Broadway, Dock Mike's, is a contributing

building to the historic district and the existing additions to the building are appropriate to the building and the historic district, the proposed changes to the building are consistent to the existing ones and the railings, the posts, the detail and the cupola are designed to be appropriate to the historic district.

For Dock Mike's owner, Michael Tramutolo, this had been a longtime dream.

"We looked at the property about 18 years ago," he said. "In the interim, we bought a property in Sea Isle and Rio Grande. This improvement will add 20 parking spaces. With the ease of parking, families coming by can park right there and walk into the restaurant. This will increase our business."

The hours of Dock Mike's Pancake House are from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., serving breakfast and lunch.

## Tourism

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pating an even better 2015 tourist season, amid a healthier economy and cheaper gas prices. He said the hotel/motel association indicated reservations are ahead of last year.

Thornton said last year the county generated \$8.8 million in occupancy tax.

Freeholder Marie Hayes said the county generated \$1.9 billion in rental income. The

county is expanding its efforts to attract visitors from the northern section of the Province of Quebec after years of targeting the greater Montreal region, she said.

Hayes said last year, the county Department of Tourism met with 19 Canadian journalists and a representative of the Canadian Automobile Association.

"This resulted in dozens of articles being written with a

public relations value of approximately \$1.5 million," she said.

The Pittsburgh area is also being targeted, as well as using billboards at toll plazas along the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Hayes said.

Air Canada will begin flights between Atlantic City and Toronto on May 22 and continue until Sept. 7. The county Department of Tourism will host four journalists from Toronto within the next few weeks, she said.

Hayes said Choice Air would begin service from Atlantic

City to Nashville and Miami on May 22.

"Choice Air has agreed to place our Vacationer Destination Guide in the pocket of each seat in all flights leaving Atlantic City," she said.

Recreational boating is a \$3 billion industry in the state, Hayes said.

Mark Allen, a writer/editor and promoter of fishing tournaments, said he represents 10,000 state residents that make their living in the recreational boating and fishing industry. He said a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration study showed New Jersey as fifth of all coastal states in the value of its recreational fishing, totaling \$644 million including fuel, trips, bait purchases and hotel accommodations.

Allen said the industry was challenged by a lack of dredging and a 7 percent sales tax

on boat sales that encourage boaters to purchase boats in other states.

Assemblyman Sam Fiocchi, R-Cape May, Cumberland, Atlantic, said the state's tourism promotion budget is underfunded at \$9 million. He noted Michigan spends \$72 million on its tourism marketing.

Fiocchi said he introduced a bill to establish a county tourism incentive grant fund to provide distribution of excess hotel/motel revenue fees. Out of the dollars the county generates from hotel/motel room tax, it gets back a little over 10 percent, he said.

"Essex County gets 135 percent, so that's certainly unfair," Fiocchi said.

He said his idea is for any excess revenue to go back to the county of its origin dollar for dollar. Fiocchi said it would be difficult to change the formula.

County Department of Tourism Director Diane Wieland said eco-tourism and agri-tour-

ism are the "next best thing."

"It's been a while since we had something new and exciting," she said. "We have the beaches, we have the boardwalk. I think Victoriana was one of the last things we had that was new and something that was developing."

Wieland said retail sales in the county exceeded \$1 billion, indicating relief from the recession and consumers' willingness to spend money.

"What we're finding is they're not spending money on the traditional T-shirt that you might think is a souvenir, they're coming into this county and buying a lot of artwork and a lot of things we don't normally think of as a souvenir," she said.

Cape May County has the most second homes in the state, representing 47 percent of dwellings in the county with 53 percent used as rental properties, representing 48,350 houses, Wieland said.

She said 25,674 jobs in the county are in tourism.

Phyllis Oppenheimer, a tourism representative of the state Division of Travel and Tourism, said Cape May County had the highest growth in visitor spending of all the shore counties last year, increasing 5.2 percent.

State and local tax receipts in Cape May County in 2014 totaled \$518 million, representing a 2.1 percent increase over 2013, she said.

"Without the tourism industry in New Jersey, every household would pay an additional \$1,460 to maintain the current level of state and local government services," Oppenheimer said.

Ryan Krill, president of Cape May Brewery, said the operation started with a 1,500-square-foot unit at the county airport and had one account. He said the brewery now has 300 accounts and just opened a 15,000-square-foot facility.

Krill said the Garden State Craft Brewers Guild, of which he is president, has grown from 11 members in 2011 to 60 members. He said in 2012, a state bill allowed production breweries to serve beer in conjunction with a tour.

Visitors to the brewery hail from New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware, Krill said.

"People love to come and visit breweries and see how it's made. It's an authentic experience and that's what makes it really special," he said.

Willow Creek Winery Director and Winemaker Kevin Celli said when he began vineyard farming eight years ago, the county had only three wineries, which has increased to six wineries producing wine that is winning in international competitions.

"We're growing grapes from Spain, Italy, France and Portugal, and we're actually beating winemakers and farmers from Spain, Italy, France and Portugal with their own grapes in competition," he said.

Celli said New Jersey is the seventh-largest producer of wine in the nation. He said agri-tourism drew all age groups. The nation has lost 17 million acres of farmland in the past seven years, with the average age of farmers at 61 years old, he said.

Vineyards are the fastest-growing sector of agriculture in the state, Celli said.

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**\*\* 2D Mad Max: Fury Road R** 11:10, 1:50, (7:10)  
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**\*\* 2D Avengers: Age of Ultron PG-13** 12:00, 1:00, 3:00, 4:00, 8:30, 7:00, 9:25, 9:55  
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Date	High		Low	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
20	10:29	10:43	4:16	4:12
21	11:18	11:29	5:05	5:00
22		12:08	5:54	5:49
23	12:16	1:00	6:44	6:41
24	1:06	1:55	7:34	7:36
25	1:58	2:51	8:25	8:34
26	2:53	3:46	9:15	9:33
27	3:49	4:37	10:03	10:29

**MOON PHASES**  
New Moon, May 20 • First Quarter, May 28

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