

# City may revisit dog ban on Washington Street

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Seeing dogs walking on the Washington Street Mall is as common as seeing tourists in flip flops eating ice cream cones. The problem is a city ordinance prohibits dogs from the mall.

At an April 18 City Council meeting, Police Chief Tony Marino said his department received several complaints during Easter weekend about dogs on the mall. He said he and Lt. Dekon Fashaw met with members of the business improvement district (BID).

“Surprisingly, there is a split amongst the business district as to pros and cons about having dogs on the mall,” Marino said.

He said officers did not find any issues with dogs during the Easter weekend.

“I did go back as far as 2014 in our old system to see whether we had a whole

lot of complaints about dog attacks or people and dog issues...” Marino said. “Typically it’s just a municipal ordinance violation that we deal with on the mall.”

Very few complaints have been registered about vicious or barking dogs on the mall, he said.

Marino said in speaking to the president of the BID, he discovered a vote took place in the past for a recommendation to allow dogs on the mall. He said the BID attempted to present the results to previous city councils but it never was presented to a full body of council. He said council may want to address the issue.

“I know that we have changing times now with dogs; they are more a part of families than they ever used to be,” Marino said.

The police department has very strict guidelines as far as how it may inquire and identify if an animal is

a service dog or comfort dog. He said the public was aware of rules pertaining to service dogs and when officers approach a person with a dog on the mall, the party may claim it is a service dog or comfort dog.

Marino said a number of businesses on the mall encouraged dogs to visit the mall and some bring their dogs to their shops.

“It’s something that we may want to revisit this as a community, just to see if there is a compromise that can be had,” he said.

The BID stated it would be willing to provide comfort stands with bags and cleanup material for dogs on the mall, Marino said.

Police would primarily be concerned with a dog attack, he said.

Marino said his biggest concern as a parent and dog owner would be a child being attacked by a dog. He said the issue also existed on the Promenade.

Councilman Roger Furlin inquired if any dog bites have occurred on the mall. Marino said there were no incidents. He said most dog bites were found east of Madison Avenue and generally involved dogs escaping from their homes and attacking other dogs. Bites to human were usually received by an owner of a dog attempting to break up a dog fight, he said.

Councilwoman Bea Pessagno acknowledged there was a “deep divide” on the issue of dogs on the mall from BID members. Marino said society’s attitude towards dogs has changed drastically during the past five to 10 years.

City Solicitor Frank Corrado said the city must ask itself how enforceable a dog ban would be. He said any time a police officer approaches someone, it raises search and seizure questions under the Fourth Amendment.



John Cooke/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE  
Shoppers on the Washington Street Mall bring along their four-legged companion in spite of the dog ban. Some merchants want dogs allowed on the mall.

# LT awards \$57,000 for feasibility study for building aquatic center at airport

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS – Lower Township Council awarded a \$57,500 contract April 12 to Lan Associates for a feasibility study to build an aquatic center with two indoor pools at the county airport.

The resolution notes an Aquatic Evaluation Committee has been established. Lan Associates broke down costs as \$3,500 for project kick-off, \$5,500 for a market analysis, \$8,000 for public outreach, \$22,500 for programming phase, \$12,500 for operation analysis and \$5,500 for a final report.

Council voted unanimously one year ago to explore the possibility of building an aquatic center. Last month, Township Manager Jim Ridgway said the township was seeking a feasibility study for a swimming pool along with a therapy pool. He said county open space funds could be available for the center.

In other business, council approved a shared services agreement with the city of Cape May to allow the Lower Township Recreation Department to use the new soccer field in Lafayette Street Park. Mayor Erik Simonsen said Lower Township was overloaded with soccer program participants. He said Cape May youth are allowed to participate in Lower Township recreation activities.

“It’s a great partnership and we appreciate it,” he said.

The agreement does not call for any exchange of money, but Lower Township will reimburse Cape May for all maintenance costs caused by its use beyond normal wear and tear.

Lower Township Recreation Department will be permitted to use the Lafayette Street Park soccer field for its youth soccer program between March 29 and May 27 from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

Council authorized electronic payments for emergency dispatch services

from the county. Lower Township will pay \$600,000 for 9-1-1 dispatch services in four quarterly payments of \$150,000.

The township was awarded \$2,400 from the Joint In-

surance Fund as a result of outstanding performance in the 2016 JIF Safety Incentive Program. The incentive program was designed to foster a safety attitude among JIF members and to

promote the safety objectives of the fund.

## FEASTING ON HISTORY

### Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6pm

NASW Aviation Museum at Cape May Airport

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Fate of the Furious PG-13 11:50, 2:50, 6:30, 9:20  
Fate of the Furious PG-13 12:30, 3:30, 7:00, 9:50  
Beauty and the Beast PG 10:50, 1:40, 4:25, 7:10, 9:55  
Going In Style PG-13 11:30, 2:10, 4:40, 6:50, 9:30  
Boss Baby PG 11:10, 1:50, 4:10, 6:40, 9:10  
Smurfs: The Lost Village PG 11:00, 1:30, 4:00  
\*\*Phoenix Forgotten PG-13 (7:40, 9:50)  
\*\*2D Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2 (Thurs Premiere) PG-13 (7:00)  
\*\*3D Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2 (Thurs Premiere) PG-13 (9:40)  
\*\*No Passes (Fri-Wed) [Thursday]

## FISH MARKET

FRIDAY, APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup>  
thru SUNDAY, APRIL 30<sup>TH</sup>

**FRESH NEW ENGLAND FLOUNDER**  
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\$5.75/PINT

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FRIDAY, APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup>  
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