

Cape May Star and Wave

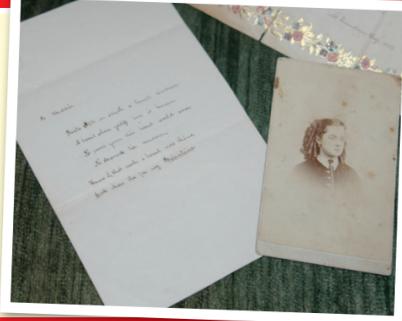
164th YEAR NO. 7

CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2018 \$1.00



House of the week

Real Estate Resource



Valentine's Day cards popular for Victorians

Page B1



Cape May OKs settlement with Sheehan

Lear lays blame firmly at feet of former mayor Mahaney

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved an \$800,000 tentative settlement with Capt. Robert Sheehan, the city's former police chief demoted three years ago by a vote of a previous council. The city will pay \$440,000 and the Atlantic Cape Joint Insurance fund will pay \$360,000.

Sheehan will continue in his current position. The settlement agreement in-

cludes the dismissal with prejudice of a pending Superior Court action, Sheehan v. the city of Cape May, and releases all claims. The settlement was approved in a 5-0 vote at council's meeting Feb. 7 and takes effect immediately.

Sheehan's lawsuit against the city brought claims under the Contentious Employee Protection Act, commonly known as the whistleblower law. According to the complaint, Sheehan sought to be reinstated as

chief of police with all lost wages and benefits. He was paid an additional \$6,000 per year as chief over his captain's salary.

According to the complaint, Sheehan was correct in placing the issue of then-Lt. Chuck Lear's alleged misuse of comp time under the investigation of the county Prosecutor's Office. It states Sheehan followed proper procedure in handling an administrative investigation of the comp time issue.

The complaint stated Bruce MacLeod, the city manager at the time, and former city solicitor Tony Monzo wanted to take disciplinary action against Lear without Sheehan's involvement.

During a council meeting Feb. 6, Councilwoman Patricia Hendricks noted in the 2016 local elections, Edward Mahaney lost the mayor's seat to Lear and Councilwoman Terry Swain

See Sheehan, Page A4

Council to Sheehan: Sorry for 'needless disruption of career'

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

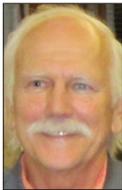
CAPE MAY — City Council approved a resolution Jan. 6 apologizing to Capt. Robert Sheehan and his family "for the needless disruption of his career, his life and his family's comfort and wellbeing."

The resolution, entitled "A resolution to recognize Cape May City police

Capt. Robert Sheehan and to honor his continuing service to the city," states, "The previous City Council took abrupt, unexplained and unwarranted action to demote Sheehan to his previous rank of captain the day before his appointment as police chief would have been affirmed and made permanent."

See Apology, Page A4

Commissioner Robert Mullock estimated there would be one truck traveling down Sunset Boulevard every six minutes. 'We are talking five days a week, and it will take over 40 weeks of these trucks coming through West Cape May, Cape May Point and down Sunset Boulevard.'



Cape May Point concerned over Higbee project

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — The Board of Commissioners was notified that the Department of Environmental Protection issued a permit for the restoration of Higbee Beach Wildlife Management Area in a project that would reintroduce saltwater tidal flow into marsh.

According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the purpose of the Pond Creek Salt Marsh Restoration Project is to restore about 270 acres of estuarine intertidal emergent wetland habitat for fish and wildlife resources.

This would be accomplished by reintroducing tidal flushing in the lower marsh areas of Pond Creek to eliminate and control common reed phragmites, an exotic and invasive

species that has formed an extensive, dense stand throughout most of Pond Creek marsh. Once established, phragmites often pushes out native salt marsh vegetation, creating habitat less suitable for wildlife.

Control of the common reed will allow the re-establishment of native salt marsh vegetation such as smooth cordgrass, salt hay grass and spike grass, thus increasing habitat available for a variety of fish and wildlife resources, in particular, the diamondback terrapin, egrets, herons, shorebirds and waterfowl.

The marsh once was a free-flowing estuarine tidal marsh before human disturbance.

"One part of the restoration I wanted to talk about is the construction plans,

Cape May Point, Page A8

Disassembled historic house seeks single vacant shore lot

By JOHN ALVAREZ
Special to the Star and Wave

AVALON — In a home at 254 6th St., there is a wall where the city's history was written. It contains the names of people who lived in the house, as well as the weather beside the date, and memorable events such as the day the space shuttle exploded.

"The whole history of Avalon was there," said Adrienne Scharnikow, of Abington, Pa. "They were really trying to save the history of the town on this wall."

Scharnikow knows a lot about this house because she lived there as child. The house was in her family from 1955 to 1996.

"My grandparents owned it and I would go there as a child. In 1996, when both of the grandparents passed away, the house was sold," she said.

After the sale, family members kept an eye on it from new owner to new owner. The last owners completely restored the house. They redid the walls, plumbing, heating, even the stained-glass windows. They brought the whole home up to its former glorious standard.

Sadly, after the last owner, the house went into foreclosure. It sat abandoned for years. Scharnikow and



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The roof of a historic home with a wall outlining the history of Avalon is being transported to house mover SJ Hauk's lot in Egg Harbor Township until one of its former occupants can find a place to move it. 'This was one of the founding houses of Avalon,' Adrienne Scharnikow said.

her family members knew it was only a matter of time before they would drive the street and see it gone. The family knew it would be demolished.

The idea was sad to Scharnikow because she knew the city's history was attached to the home. It is registered as a founding house of Avalon since it was built in 1895 by George W. Kates, the first tax assessor and the first builder in Avalon. There are even articles acquired by Scharnikow that Kates was contem-

plating building the house earlier than 1895.

"He built the house for his family," Scharnikow said. "He signed his name underneath the house. There is his name in red calligraphy under the house."

The house has a cupola built on nautical maps from the 1880s and is probably the only one in the city to claim this. It has a widow's walk and more than 20 stained-glass windows.

"This was one of the founding houses of Avalon. We thought the town should

be able to do something with it," she said.

Scharnikow found out when an auction date was scheduled and she went to Avalon to take a few pictures for nostalgic reasons.

While there, the real estate broker, Jerry Raffa from Sea Isle, told her the building was scheduled to be demolished in two months. Scharnikow said she asked about preserving the house. Raffa said if she took the house off the lot, it would

See Historic, Page A8

Committee recommends combined safety building at firehouse site

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Public Safety Building Advisory Committee is recommending City Council move forward with a new facility to house the fire and police departments and proceed with site survey work.

The committee stated a new public safety building is necessary for residents and visitors and a further delay of the project would "increase

all risks and costs." As soon as possible, a site survey should be authorized by council, the committee suggested.

"Committee members have determined the best location is the present site for both the police and fire departments," stated the committee's report. "The ideal complex would be a conjoined building."

The report recommends council consider the possibility of a bid process for engineering and architectural work.

"Although it was not the responsibility of our committee to evaluate other situations, i.e. parking, and other future construction or redevelopment projects, extreme thought should be given to the entire project," states the report.

The committee reviewed all potential sites for the location of a comprehensive building capable of housing public safety services. The review focused on properties owned by the city. After elimination of beach, wetland and known re-

stricted sites, the committee recommended the current fire station site.

The committee discussed two other sites — Kiwanis Park on Madison Avenue and the corner of Elmira and Broad streets adjoining the transportation center — and determined having the police and fire stations at separate sites could increase site and engineering work as much as \$500,000.

The recommendation of the committee was unanimous for the current site of the fire department as

the best location for a new public safety building, Committee Chairman Jerry Gaffney said during a City Council meeting Feb. 6. He said it was a majority decision as to whether the police department should be on the same site conjoined with the fire department.

"The ball is in your court now whether you want the committee to move forward with any further direction or recommendations,"

See Combined, Page A2



WASHINGTON INN

Open Valentine's Day
Wednesday, Feb 14th

3-course for  \$49 and \$75 menu

OPEN FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY
ON PRESIDENTS WEEKEND

Cape May Wine School
Sunday, February 18th at 1pm

The Great Wines of Sonoma County.
Tasting of 9 wines from Jackson Family Wines



801 WASHINGTON STREET + 609-884-5697 + WWW.WASHINGTONINN.COM