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Pot's Legal; Towns Weigh Options

“The sales tax does make it more enticing, as we are always looking for more revenue to keep our taxes low. It definitely gives City Council something they will need to discuss further.”

- Michal Voll, Cape May's interim city manager

By KAREN KNIGHT

COURT HOUSE - Now that adult-use cannabis was legalized for those 21 years and older, municipal officials are scrambling to figure out what, if anything, they plan to do about allowing it to be sold, grown, distributed, or used within their communities.

Gov. Phil Murphy Feb. 22 signed historic adult-use cannabis reform bills into law, including A21 - “The New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act,” which legalizes and regulates cannabis use and possession for adults 21 years and older (<http://bit.ly/3syEBP>) and A1897, which decriminalizes marijuana and hashish possession (<http://bit.ly/2Mt9YMJ>).

According to a release (<https://bit.ly/37DjMex>), the governor also signed

S3454 (<http://bit.ly/2NGqqtz>), clarifying alcohol, marijuana, and cannabis use and consumption for those younger than 21.

The legislation also corrects inconsistencies in A21 and A1897 concerning marijuana and cannabis penalties for those who are underage.

While the new law allows for the possession of up to six ounces of marijuana, it will likely take time before state residents can legally purchase it, as the state has to set up a marketplace and regulations for the new industry.

In the meantime, municipalities like Cape May, Middle Township, and Avalon have until Aug. 27 to decide the best course of action in the best interest of their community.

“We have 180 days to review the new law,” said Cape May’s Interim City Manager

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School Districts Set to Lose State Aid Funds

COURT HOUSE – The state Department of Education has released proposed school aid figures based on Gov. Phil Murphy’s \$44.8 billion Fiscal Year 2022 budget.

All but three school districts in Cape May County will see decreased aid, part of a continuation of the Murphy administration’s changes to the funding formula intended to move money

from districts deemed overfunded to those that have been underfunded.

The 2018 School Funding Reform Act imposed a seven-year step down in adjustment aid for school districts with declining enrollment. It also removed limits that had previously reduced the aid allocated to districts with growing enrollments.

The preliminary figures released this week for Fiscal Year 2022 show county districts losing \$6,282,318, or 11.32%, when compared to funding levels in the previous year. The only two districts that would see an increase are Ocean City, up \$156,799, and West Wildwood, up \$455. The County Vocational District would see no change.

All other districts will experience a drop in state aid.

In Fiscal Year 2021, county school districts saw a decrease in state aid of \$5,159,081, or 8.5%.

-Vince Conti

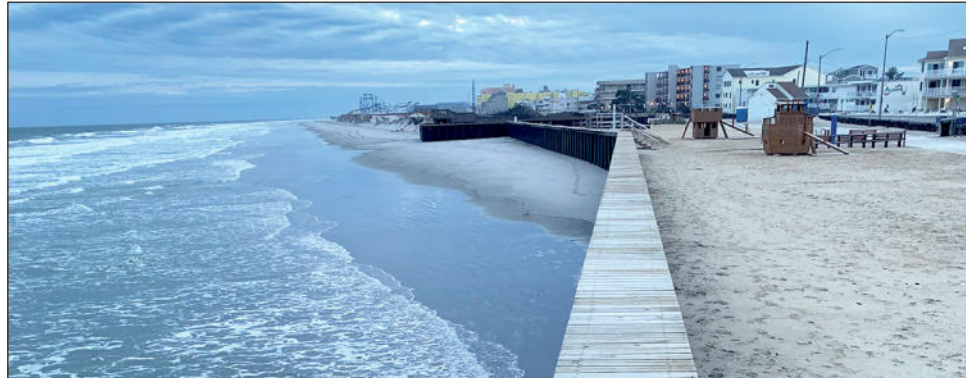
N. Wildwood Moving Bulkheads, Extending Sea Wall

NORTH WILDWOOD – The city will make major changes to its beachfront infrastructure in the north end of the island, redesigning and moving an existing bulkhead and adding a seawall on its ocean side, with eventual plans for a dune to cover the storm defense measure, North Wildwood Mayor Patrick Rosenello said, in an interview.

The project is not directly related to the Notices of Violation (NOV) issued to the city last June (<http://bit.ly/3uly8nB>) by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Rosenello added.

“It’s hard to say. It’s all so intermingled. So, it would address a part of the violation because we did submit to the DEP for a permit for this, so once they grant the permit, then that’s no longer a violation, I believe,” said Rosenello, maintaining this was not a demand of the DEP in negotiations

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A section of North Wildwood’s beachfront bulkhead, seen here, looking north between 5th and 7th avenues, will be moved landward and straightened to bring it into compliance, after the DEP issued Notices of Violation to the city last June. A seawall will be added in front of it to further fortify the island’s north end. Eventual plans call for sand to cover the sea wall and bulkhead and a dune to be restored.

Speaker to Officers: ‘Be Human’

By BILL BARLOW

COURT HOUSE – Fundamental disparities in policing in the U.S. exist, according to Dr. Theodore Darden, who spoke during a presentation organized by the Cape May County Prosecutor’s Office and the Coalition for a Safe Community on “The History of Law Enforcement in the Black Community.”

Darden, a professor of justice studies at the College of DuPage, in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, served as a law enforcement officer for 17 years before entering academia, rising to the rank of patrol sergeant.

The roots of policing are in oppressive systems, he told a virtual meeting Feb. 23, including in the antebellum slave catching patrols and Royal Irish Constabulary, which sought to quell movements seeking independence from Britain.

Robert Peel, often described as the father of the modern British police system, learned his craft in Ireland.

“He was in charge of making sure they didn’t

rise up against the empire,” Darden said.

As the modern, uniformed police departments began in the U.S. toward the end of the 19th century, he said, the nation was in the midst of unrest, including strikes by miners, a rising labor movement, and restive immigrant populations.

“The inception of the modern police was formed as a means of social control,” he said.

In his presentation, Darden discussed the history of policing, arguing that many of the current systems end up doing more harm in communities they are supposed to help, leaving police officers and community members frustrated and disconnected.

His presentation was not entirely dire. He praised Cape May County for taking active steps toward addressing long-simmering issues and sought to establish a pathway for stronger connections between police and the communities they serve.

He described coming changes to New Jersey’s guidelines for the use of force, reforms initiated

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Analysis

An Introduction to a Series”

How Climate Change Impacts CMCo.

“The Herald’s Commitment to Understanding Our Changing Climate

By Shay Roddy with Art Hall

The Herald will be making a broad and continuing effort to answer some of the most, significant, relevant and controversial questions about the climate, the way it is changing, and how that change will affect our county, through a multi-article series spanning the coming months.

Given that people in Cape May County live at the ocean’s edge, global warming will have a disproportionate impact on the county’s geography, its businesses, visitors, residents, and ecology.

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Plan your dining and entertainment fun with family and friends!
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