



What's THIS?

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Sewell Tract Remains Intact After 30 Years

By VINCE CONTI

CAPE MAY - One of New Jersey's longest-running civil cases was settled. The Sewell Tract, a large 100-acre natural preserve, was set apart from any future development, even as new home development and property values soar in island resort communities.

Background

It began when a developer purchased 100 acres in East Cape May roughly 60 years ago. Cape May, then anxious for development, pledged to provide utilities.

Delay in movement on the development left the land unused just as the state began to take seriously the environmental protection of wetlands. State regulations on the environment grew stiffer, posing a new problem when the developer, East Cape May Associates (ECMA), sought approvals for developing the tract, finally proposing a 366-home project in 1991. The state blocked the proposal over issues of potential

environmental damage.

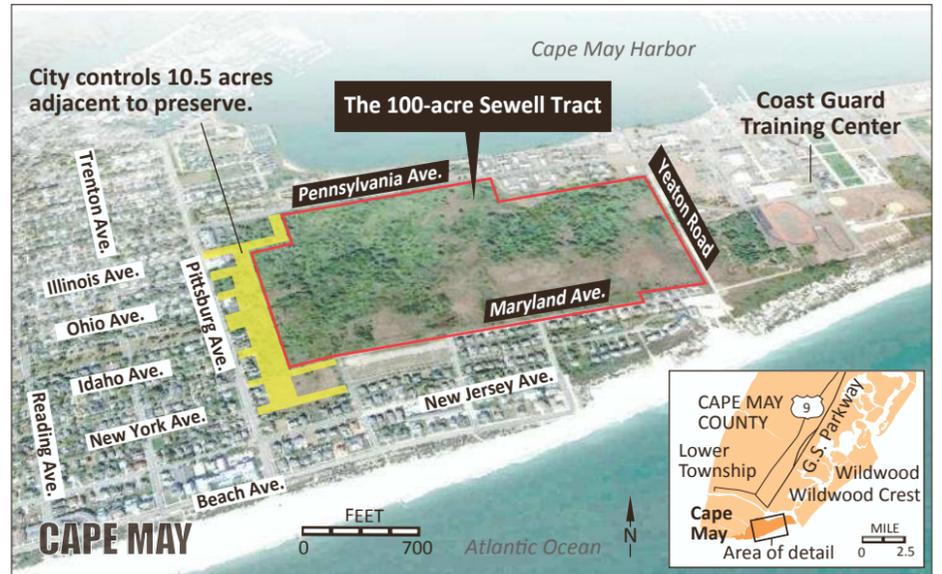
In 1992, almost 30 years ago, ECMA initiated litigation against the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), claiming the state engaged in a regulatory taking of its property without appropriate compensation.

In the three decades that followed, lawyers and judges changed. City administration came and went, taking various positions for and against the land's development.

A settlement appeared imminent in 2009, which would've involved partial development of the tract and included city commitments for infrastructure construction. That settlement failed when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a federal agency, blocked the proposed location of the development.

The fate of the 100-acre parcel was an issue in city politics. It was debated in the 2012 elec-

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Source: Image from Google Maps

Herald graphic/ Krishna Mathias

Use of Aluminum Lifeguard Stands Questioned

By KAREN KNIGHT



Provided

Upper Township Beach Patrol designed its own lifeguard stand, fabricated by a Cape May business specializing in aluminum welding and fabrication.

WILDWOOD CREST - A recent Berkeley Township tragedy, where a lifeguard died after being struck by lightning, caused some residents to question the use of aluminum lifeguard stands in Spout Off.

However, local beach patrol leaders claim the stands are a "huge improvement" over wooden stands, while weather experts note that the dominant factors controlling where a lightning bolt will strike are height, pointy shape, and isolation.

"It was an unfortunate accident," Wildwood Crest Beach Patrol Chief Bud Johnson said, regarding the Berkeley Township accident. "A real tragedy."

"Accidents happen, unfortunately, but metals do not attract lightning," he continued. "I'm a firm believer in the aluminum chairs; our guards love them, and they are a huge improvement over the wooden stands because they are main-

tenance-free, lightweight, and have wheels on them, so they are easy to move."

"Accidents happen, unfortunately, but metals do not attract lightning." - Wildwood Crest Beach Patrol Chief Bud Johnson

"People need to do the research about lightning," he added. "We've been purchasing the aluminum chairs for about the past eight years now. We have 30 in total; up to 28 chairs are used during the prime season. I did the research and would never have anything that would put our guards in danger."

The odds of being struck by lightning, according

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Cape May Councilman Guilty of Stalking, Contempt

By VINCE CONTI

COURT HOUSE - At a Superior Court hearing Sept. 17, Cape May City Councilman Christopher Bezaire, 43, also a local realtor, pleaded guilty to charges that he stalked an ex-girlfriend and violated a court order. Sentencing is scheduled for Jan. 21 before Judge Bernard DeLury.

Bezaire was arrested June 16 on charges that

also included invasion of privacy and cyber harassment. While incarcerated for almost two weeks in the Cape May County Correctional Facility, Bezaire had new charges added relating to similar behavior toward a second woman, including posting lewd or obscene photos of her with the intent to cause emotional harm.

The total charges against him grew to seven. He was considered a no-bail offender until DeLury ordered his release June 28.

In the Sept. 17 plea arrangement, the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office agreed to have Bezaire plead guilty to two of the charges, both

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CMCo Library Celebrates 50 Years with Time Capsule Burial

By REBECCA FOX



Rebecca Fox

Library Director Andrea Orsini Sept. 18, 2021, places a time capsule in the ground to be uncovered in 50 years.

COURT HOUSE - Cape May County Library System celebrated its 50th anniversary Sept. 18, at the pocket park adjacent to the Court House library.

The pocket park was decorated whimsically for the celebration, with little paper lanterns adorning trees, streamers wrapped around railings and bushes, chalk art on the sidewalks and side of the building, and other shiny ornaments throughout.

The celebration began with a ceremony, where several speakers shared their connection to the library, as well as a piece of history about it.

Andrea Orsini, library director, began by welcoming everyone.

"This library has been the heart of our library system for the past 50 years," she said, "and I am confident that it will remain the heart of the library system for the next 50 years."

She noted that a lot of the library systems have changed since their origins in 1971, but the mission remains the same.

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Sept. 11-17, 2021

CAPE MAY COUNTY COVID-19

New reported cases: **291**

Active cases:	Hospitalizations as of Sept. 20:	Deaths this week:
478	14	3

Herald Seeks Reader Support

RIO GRANDE - The Herald's website has transitioned to subscription-only access to news content, urging readers to join the cause and support local journalism.

Herald website users must now have a subscription and be logged into their Herald user account to access news content. The price for

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