



Berlin adds third parcel to Heron Park RFP

Interested parties inquire about additional property, so town makes it available

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) After issuing a request for proposals for parcels 57 and 410 in Heron Park last month, the Berlin Town Council on Monday

agreed to add a third section, parcel 191, to the package.

Mayor Zach Tyndall said an inquiry was made about adding parcel 191 during a pre-proposal meeting and site tour held for interested parties on Nov. 15. The lot encompasses just over 1.5 acres.

"It's the area where we had the single stream recycling," he said.

Town officials are seeking lease or

purchase offers for parcels 57 and 410 that total 16 acres of the overall 63-acre Heron Park.

Tyndall said after parcel 191 was mentioned during the November site tour, he offered to present the request for council consideration.

Berlin bought the land, which was the site of the former Tyson poultry plant located on Old Ocean City Boulevard for roughly \$2.5 million in

2015 from Berlin Properties North, which counts Councilman Troy Purnell among its ownership.

Berlin is paying \$200,000 annually through 2045 to clear that debt.

Town Administrator Jeff Fleetwood said parcel 191 sits directly behind Croppers Towing.

"There is a structure on the property ... that houses a significant

See COUNCIL Page 4



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

SWEET TREAT

John and Barbara Oltman take delight as their grandson, Kingston Oltman, 7, taste tests his cookie creation during the "Gingerbread Man Decorating" event at the Ocean Pines Community Center on Friday.

Rental rules talk gets into property rights

Main obstacle to ordinance regulating short-term units

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) Concerns about limiting property rights were a key point during a discussion of regulating short-term rentals during the mayor and council meeting on Monday.

Mayor Zach Tyndall said the intent was reviving earlier talks to ascertain what points council members feel should be included in a short-term rental ordinance.

"Before we get [Planning Director] Dave Engelhart and [Attorney] Dave Gaskill sharpening their pencils," he said.

Tyndall suggested the ordinance should provide for an appeals process before the Housing Board of Review for short-term rental license violations or suspensions.

Councilman Jack Orris noted an earlier point regarding an emergency contact for rentals.

"We talked about a contact person within 30 minutes of the location," he said.

Police Chief Arnold Downing said a better approach would be requiring an emergency contact person to respond in a timely manner if problems

See SHORT-TERM Page 2

Perrone tells critic he's staying put

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) Repeating a scene from November's board meeting, longtime Ocean Pines resident Roelof "Dutch" Oostven last week asked both association President Larry Perrone and Vice President Colette Horn

to resign from their posts.

During the board meeting on Saturday, Oostven returned to double down on the request.

"I had quite a few calls about my statement," he said.

Oostven estimated 80 percent of the members he spoke to voiced

agreement with his sentiments aired in November.

"What I'm saying, for the year 2022, is that we have to get a new start without you and the vice president," he said.

Oostven estimated eight staff

See CRITIC Page 4

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Berlin Council member Troy Purnell, left, absorbs a point from Town Administrator Jeff Fleetwood, while council member Jack Orris, below, keeps track of the proceedings during the Town Council meeting on Monday.

Short-term rental regs run up against property rights

Continued from Page 1
arose.

“The big thing is upon notification they give us a response with a proper time of arrival,” he said. “Sometimes the situation can be handled by phone.”

Councilwoman Shaneka Nichols asked if rental licenses could be displayed both inside and outside of properties.

Engelhart said rental licenses could be numbered to ease tracking for violations of town code.

“If there are issues, it could be reported based on the license number,” he said.

Tyndall agreed that rental licenses should be posted inside the home with a number that correlates to an outside display for cross-reference.

An earlier talking point about limiting short-term rentals to an owner’s primary residence opened a prolonged exchange with a pair of Berlin homeowners in attendance.

Engelhart said the initial discussions for a rental ordinance included an annual 180-day residency requirement.

“The idea for that was that we didn’t have an investor or group of investors buy six or seven homes all in a row on one street,” he said.

The goal is to protect the character of neighborhoods, Engelhart said.

Questioning the wisdom of the primary residency requirement was resident John Watson.

Watson said short-term rentals help promote the town, regardless of the precise amount of time owners reside on site.

“They’re still paying taxes [and] it’s still their property,” he said. “They still have a vested interest in making sure that it’s being maintained properly.”

Watson failed to see an issue if short-term renters are respectful to the town.

Watson suggested restricting homeowners to marketing a single short-

term rental as opposed to a primary residency rule.

“Maybe let people own one home but drop the 180 days,” he said. “You might be excluding some people you don’t intend.”

Also taking issue with the 180-day rule was resident Gabriel Sergeant.

Sergeant, whose primary residence is in Baltimore County, recently purchased a second home in Berlin with her husband.

“We’re not in a position to own two homes,” she said.

Renting their Berlin property for short-term uses enables the family to cover mortgage costs, Sergeant said.

Prior to investing in property, the Sergeants conducted extensive research online, specifically on Airbnb.

“One thing stood out ...the reviews are absolutely outstanding,” she said. “They’re not young people coming to party.”

Councilman Dean Burrell said an alternative approach would be to limit property owners to a single short-term rental.

Tyndall asked Engelhart if Berlin has areas with a proliferation of short-term rentals.

Despite Engelhart stating Berlin currently has few short-term rentals within town limits, Burrell advocated taking a proactive stance.

“That maybe the case today, but what about tomorrow ... if we don’t put regulations in place to prohibit just that,” he said.

Engelhart said although a larger number of short-term rentals are advertised online, the bulk are in the Berlin area, with only about a dozen in town limits.

Tyndall asked if the town could limit the number of rental licenses issued.

Gaskill questioned the legality of such an approach.

“You’re getting on shaky ground,”

See REALTORS Page 3



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Shady Side Village will be built on the southwest corner of Old Bridge Road and Greenridge Lane in West Ocean City. The residential planned community, nearly four years in the works, received approval from the Worcester County Commissioners on Dec. 7 to build a private road on the property.

Shady Side Village gets OK to build and keep own road

By Jack Chavez
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) The residential planned community going up at the intersection of Old Ocean City Road and Greenridge Lane in West Ocean City received a few more thumbs up from Worcester County earlier this month.

On Dec. 1, the Planning Commission gave a favorable review to the site developers of Shady Side Village for their request for an amended setback on the property and to install a private road on the property.

On Dec. 7, the county commissioners received that recommendation, unanimously concurred and approved a request to reduce the community from a proposed 37 townhomes to 33 “townhouse and duplex units,” as Development, Review and Permitting Director Jennifer Keener described it.

The private road was the biggest development for the community. The approval means the road will not be the responsibility of the county to maintain.

“Basically, every lot has to have frontage on a county road,” said attorney Hugh Cropper, who represents landowner Kathy Clark and Shady Side Village LLC. “There’s a law that says within a development, you can have an approved private road built to county standards. So they’re just doing (that), which means that the homeowners association will be responsible for its maintenance, not the county.”

The road, Keener said during the commissioners meeting, differs “from the county roads RPC standard,” which is what required the commissioners’ approval.

The 860-foot road will consist of 69-foot and 75-foot spurs.

Commissioner Jim Bunting asked at one point if there’s a chance the road will come back into the county’s care.

“If the county were to take it over, they’d have to rebuild it to county road standards or come back for (the commissioners) to add this road design to the county road specifications,” Keener replied. “We recommended that they go this route. I don’t believe it is planned (that the road will switch hands).”

Shady Side Village has been in the works for nearly four years. The project is a redevelopment of an existing property. The 4.82-acre site is surrounded by a motel, trailer park and commercial area.

In 2020, architect Keith Iott said there would be three recreation areas in the community that would include physical fitness areas and more general recreation such as corn hole and badminton.

Realtors say take small steps first

Continued from Page 2

he said. “People have property rights.” Colin Zimmerman, with the Coastal Association of Realtors, suggested the council start small in terms of rental regulations.

“If the problems are noise, health and safety, solve those problems,” he said.

Zimmerman recommended assuring occupancy limits are adhered to and that renters are respectful to the surrounding community.

“That’s going to solve 99 percent of your problems,” he said. “Don’t start by limiting private property rights for people that live in your town.”

Burrell doubled down on the need for proactive measures to address potential complaints tied to short-term rentals.

“We maybe at this point [are] looking for a solution to a problem we don’t have, but somewhere down the road there will be a property owner that comes to us and complains,” he said.

Burrell said residents had sent texts that evening to share concerns.

“I just got a text ... saying the biggest issue is we will lose our neighborhoods,” he said.

Nichols concurred, also noting receiving texts that evening from residents worried about short-term rentals introducing a steady stream of unknown visitors to their neighborhood.

Nichols said some property owners view short-term rentals as an infringement on their rights.

Nichols said second-home owners should not be allowed to negatively affect the character of the community.

“Until you can live here, this is not your home, you’re visiting and allowing people to pay your mortgage for you,” she said. “People are saying this is not what we want for Berlin.”

Watson argued short-term rentals would help promote Berlin to a wider demographic.

“We’ve identified that we don’t have a current problem,” he said. “I do look at my neighborhood like Mayberry [and] don’t want the whole community to be a bunch of Airbnbs.”

Watson expressed doubts that short-term rentals would proliferate in Berlin as the majority of single-family home owners are not interested in renting out their digs.

Watson said a balance should be struck to permit a limited number of short-term rentals in Berlin.

“It’s another family that comes to our town and says, ‘I love it here, I might want to live here one day,’” he said.

Nichols said boundaries need to be established.

“If you keep flipping it enough, the problems that we don’t have will arise,” she said.


Watson said Berlin is a resort destination town.

“That’s Ocean City,” Nichols replied. “Many people move here because they don’t want to be in a tourist area.”

Tyndall, who noted differing opinions, said that evening’s discussion points would be incorporated into a draft ordinance for council review and a public hearing early next year.

“I think we’ve got a good idea of the main components that need to be in a short-term rental ordinance,” he said.





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Council adds parcel to plan to sell some park property

Continued from Page 1

amount of water resources," he said.

Fleetwood said if the section were lumped into the Heron Park request for proposals (RFP), relocating supplies such as water valves and fire hydrants would have to be addressed.

"We need to think long and hard about a storage facility," he said.

Jimmy Charles, who was promoted to Director of Public Works that evening, noted the locale hosts raw materials such as stone and sand not available elsewhere in town.

Tyndall said depending on the nature of proposals submitted the site might prove a less-than-ideal storage location in the future.

"We also need to weigh those operational things we do now with the existing site," he said.

Council member Jay Knerr adopted a conservative approach.

"We should wait to see what kind of proposals we get for the RFP," he said.

Tyndall said if parcel 191 were added, it would be in the same manner as parcels 57 and 410.

"We can approve those individually but it's also allowing whoever is interested to look at the property more holistically," he said.

Council member Dean Burrell voiced support for including parcel 191 in the Heron Park RFP.

"It could always be withdrawn," he said.

Councilwoman Shaneka Nichols also backed the proposal, albeit with some reservations.

"As long as we're not locking ourselves in," she said.



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Council member Dean Burrell, left, voices support for including parcel 191 in the recently issued Heron Park RFP, while Mayor Zach Tyndall takes notation during the Berlin Town Council meeting on Monday.

Tyndall confirmed with Town Attorney Dave Gaskill that adding the third parcel would not require formal action by council.

"We will add parcel 191 to the RFP and send that to parties that have expressed interest," he said.

On a related note, last Friday Berlin announced the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development had awarded the town a demolition fund grant for \$500,000 to cover costs for removing the former Tyson poultry plant.

Critic harangues Perrone, tells him to resign

Continued from Page 1

members or elected officials have quit under the current board leadership.

"We cannot go the way you're wanting to go," he said.

Oostven also took issue with OPA legal counsel Jeremy Tucker.

"Why do we have a lawyer 200 miles away from Ocean Pines," he said.

More important than proximity, Oostven said the association's legal counsel has repeatedly provided unsound advice, most recently with the pending litigation brought by disqualified board candidate Rick Farr.

"It cost us money, at least \$25,000 before the insurance kicked in," he said.

Oostven espoused support for Farr's candidacy.

"I hope the judgment is in his favor, so that you people learn a lesson," he said.

Despite Perrone declining the request to step down last month, Oostven reiterated his wish on Saturday.

"I ask you to quit," he said. "You're not the right man for Ocean Pines."

For his part, after declining public comment last month, on Saturday Perrone aired it out.

"I didn't respond last month out of respect," he said.

Still, following the meeting in November Perrone spoke to Oostven to dispel any notions of resigning.

Perrone also questioned Oostven's assertion about motivating resignations.

"I don't know who these eight people are that you think that I forced to resign," he said. "You need to get your facts straight."

Perrone was also quick to deflect sole responsibility for engaging in the court battle with Farr.

"The board made decisions on the litigation we're involved in," he said. "You have seven people up here who make the decision."

As Oostven attempted to chime in with additional comments, Perrone raised his voice to end the exchange.

"I can guarantee you that neither the vice president nor I will be resigning," he said. "Thank you, your time is up."

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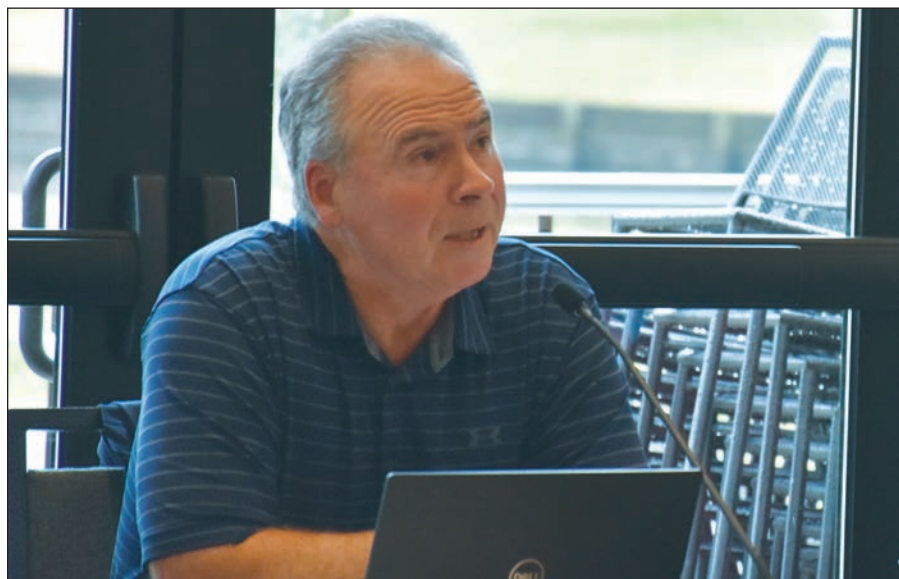
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GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Ocean Pines Association President Larry Perrone responds after Roelof "Dutch" Oostven requests his resignation during the Board of Directors meeting on Saturday.



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Ocean Pines General Manager John Viola reviewed a host of projects and current financials during the Board of Directors meeting on Saturday.

Pines GM updates budget, capital projects, bulkheads

By Greg Ellison

Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) In addition to discussing the 2022/23 fiscal year budget process, Ocean Pines General Manager John Viola also provided updates on bulkhead repairs, drainage work and audio system enhancements during the board meeting on Saturday.

Viola said next fiscal year's proposed budget figures have been reviewed and signed off on by all department heads.

"The good news is we're actually ahead of schedule," he said.

The Budget and Finance Committee are slated to receive budget binders before Christmas.

Viola said the pending budget process faces unique challenges.

"There are headwinds," he said. "Inflation ... has raised its head again."

Rising costs for goods and services are likely to add a degree of difficulty.

"It will impact the proposed budget," he said. "I'm trying to break out the effect of inflation on each department."

Additionally, an increase in minimum wage is also at play.

"It's a big number for us," he said.

Viola said besides aligning with higher minimum pay, the association has also faced challenges recruiting and retaining staff.

Although not approved last session, Maryland's General Assembly is expected to pass legislation in 2022 to mandate reserve balances for homeowner associations.

"It will have an impact on our assessment premiums," he said.

As introduced last year, the state legislation would require homeowner associations to conduct a survey of asset values.

Association President Larry Perrone said from all indications the legislation would be considered again in

2022.

"We don't know what the legislation will require," he said. "We won't have years to get it adjusted."

On a brighter note, Viola said there are also tailwinds likely to aid budgeting.

"We have a surplus that we recognized last year," he said.

Viola also noted higher revenues from amenities and improved departmental bottom lines evidenced during the current fiscal year.

"We are favorable, and we have increased revenues," he said.

In line with the prior year, Viola said the association is currently operating with a budget surplus.

At this point, Viola said the association needs to weigh options to lower assessment charges or stash funds in reserve to account for potential new state mandates.

In terms of current financials, Public Works Office Manager Linda Martin reported the association closed October \$72,000 favorable to budget.

October figures included revenues favorable by \$149,000 with expenses running \$77,000 higher than budgeted.

Martin said the year-to-date figures through October reflect a net operating surplus of \$1.3 million, including revenues over budget by \$1.2 million and expenses under by \$150,000.

Turning to capital projects, Viola said the previously budgeted additional pickleball courts are now moving forward.

"We finally received the permits for the pickleball courts at the Racquet Center," he said.

After permits were received, bid packages for the project were sent to four area contractors.

Viola said the pickleball court additions should be completed before next summer.

See VIOLA Page 6

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Berlin Planning considers lumber yard pitch

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) Berlin Planning Commission members held a concept review for Florida-based Decks & Docks Lumber Company to develop a one-acre lot on Franklin Avenue last Wednesday.

Regional Manager Brian Basye said Decks & Docks are a leading supplier in the marine construction and decking industry.

“We are the leaders in the areas

that we operate,” he said.

Basye said Decks & Docks, which launched in 1991 in St. Petersburg, Florida, supplies contractors and homeowners with building materials for outdoor enhancements.

“It would not be a large retail center,” he said. “It’s a very specific type of contractor we’re working with.”

Decks & Docks marketing is not aimed at retailing building materials for new construction.

“We’re a supplier who would work

with contractors in this area,” he said. “The property would be an ideal lumber yard.”

Since current ownership took over Decks & Docks in 2005 the outfit has expanded to 20 locations in seven eastern seaboard states.

Basye estimated decks and railings account for 36 percent of sales, with lumber totaling 25 percent followed by pilings at 15 percent and seawall at 11 percent.

Basye said the Franklin Avenue property is currently underutilized.

“We could do more with it,” he said.

Basye also said fencing would be required to keep materials stored outside secure.

Unlike typical building material supplies, the majority of lumber stocked is treated, so outdoor storage would not require overhead covering.

Basye said access would be required for a 15-foot right of way to gain side road access from Franklin Avenue for loading needs.

Planning Director Dave Engelhart

said the internal road right of way is shared with an adjacent property and is not town-owned.

Basye said site plans have not yet been developed but would ideally commence following the concept review.

“We’re not sure what you need to see,” he said.

Basye said the site is less expansive than other Decks & Docks locations but would provide sufficient space for operations.

“It’s small for us but we could make it work,” he said.

Engelhart said after discussing a number of available parcels with Basye, the Franklin Avenue spot was deemed ideal due to being zoned B-3 light industrial.

“We looked at other spots when Brian first came in two months ago,” he said.

Commission member George Austin Purnell echoed the overall support for the project.

“It would be nice to have a functioning business back there,” he said.



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Decks & Docks Lumber Company Regional Manager Brian Basye and Nicole Smith presented the Berlin Planning Commission a concept review for a proposed location on Franklin Avenue last week.

Viola provides board budget projections, project previews

Continued from Page 5

Viola also presented a recommendation to install a hybrid video system in either the Golf Clubhouse or the Assateague Room in the community center.

The association previously contracted Mid-South Audio to install comparable equipment in the board room in the administration building.

“We used it for the budget process last year and I thought it was great,” he said.

The proposal would involve Mid-South installing a custom table with built-in microphone and cameras, which would be integrated with the existing system and work with Microsoft Teams.

The cost would be \$15,000 to install the equipment in either location, with the Assateague Room costing an additional sum for a projector and screen.

Viola also reviewed recent work completed on the North Gate Bridge.

On Dec. 9, wooden bridge beams were power washed with holiday decorations added to spruce up appearances.

Following a pair of recent accidents on the bridge, cost estimates were prepared to either repair or relocate the guard sheds.

Viola said it would cost roughly \$2,500 to repair or remove guard sheds, while relocating the structures to White Horse Park would run about \$12,000.

Viola recommended repairing and maintaining the sheds in their tradi-

tional spot.

“You can see we’re cleaning it up,” he said.

Additional recommendations offered included adding LED floodlighting for all four corners of the bridge.

“We would light up the bridge and approach on both ends,” he said.

Looking at upcoming bulkhead repair work, Viola said approximately 2,000 square feet along Pintail Drive and Pintail Park is slated for attention next spring.

The total cost at \$425 per square foot would be \$850,000.

To guarantee pricing rates stay unchanged, Viola requested the board grant early approval for the next round of repairs.

“This is the same drill as last year,” he said. “We did it last year to lock in prices and we had savings.”

Switching to drainage work, Martin said high density polyethylene pipes intended for installation under three roads, — Sandyhook, Beaconhill and Pinehurst — are now on site.

Martin said the drainage work was delayed after it was discovered utility lines running under the roads would require relocating.

Worcester County Public Works estimated costs at \$76,000 to relocate utility lines, with materials running \$50,000 and installation around \$170,000.

“The total for this portion is \$297,000,” she said.

Martin said the project is intended to wrap by early spring.



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County schedules hearing for zoning reclassification

By Jack Chavez

Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) The Worcester County Commissioners agreed on Dec. 7 to hold a public hearing regarding the reclassification of 8.34 acres in Berlin from resource conservation area (RCA) to limited development area (LDA).

The public hearing will occur at the second commissioners meeting of the new year, on Jan. 18, Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young said.

The property is along the 8200 block of Stephen Decatur Highway, east of Ayres Creek. Representatives for Todd Burbage, owner of Ayres Creek Farm LLC, and the lot in question, claim that a mapping mistake resulted in the RCA classification.

“When initially mapped, this property was designated as (RCA) due to the conditions and environmental aspects present at the time of mapping,” a memo from Department of the Environment natural resources administrator Jenelle Gerthoffer stated. “The RCA designation within the Critical Area Program is the most restrictive and is characterized by wetlands, forests, agricultural lands and various other nature-dominated environments.”

Gerthoffer’s memo states that at the time it was initially mapped, the land did not qualify for LDA designation, but significant changes in the surrounding area have occurred since that justify reclassification, such as shifts in housing density, land use and the presence of public sewer and water.

Attorney Hugh Cropper, who represents Burbage, said that as far as he’s aware, there are no plans to make any changes to the property—this is simply about changing a zoning error made decades ago.

“The purpose of the reclassification is to bring the current use and condition of the property in conformance to what it should be,” Cropper said. “It’s really correcting a mistake that happened in 2002.”

At the Planning Commission’s November meeting, Cropper argued that the property should have been designated as LDA when the Critical Area maps were created because the property and area within the Critical Area Zone included a clubhouse that served an adjacent golf course.

The commission voted 4-1 in favor of reclassification.

Should it be approved after the public hearing, the reclassification will bring the land and the structures on it into conformity with the LDA classification, Cropper said.

The parcel has a long history of different uses. It was originally farmland, part of a 99.06-acre assemblage

See CONSERVE Page 8

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Ocean Pines survey highlights challenges

Strategic Planning Co-Chair Bernie McGorry presented summary of data on Sat.

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) The Ocean Pines Board of Directors received a preliminary summary of data compiled from the recently completed property owners' survey during its meeting on



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Strategic Planning Committee Co-Chair Bernie McGorry reviewed a preliminary summary of a property owners' survey during the Board of Directors meeting on Saturday.

Saturday.

Strategic Planning Committee Co-Chair Bernie McGorry said 1,838 survey responses were received by the Nov. 15 deadline.

"The headline here is to thank the property owners for the tremendous engagement," he said.

The overall tally far exceeded the previously stated goal of 1,000 replies.

"We're working on a ... long-range plan for Ocean Pines," he said.

McGorry said the committee was aiming for a minimum of 500 responses from full and part-time residents.

Although the mark was reached for both segments, full-time owners outpaced part-timers by 1,127 to 684.

Electronic or online survey responses significantly outpaced hard copy replies by 1,773 to 65.

"We really expected more hard-copy surveys to be completed," he said. "We had put them throughout the community to make them readily available."

In terms of age ranges, McGorry said most respondents were between 61-70 years of age, followed by 71-80, which narrowly outpaced ages 51-60.

Among the survey aims were identifying issues of highest importance to property owners, ranking values

and receiving feedback on strengths and weaknesses.

"We wanted to really look at the overall satisfaction number one," he said.

McGorry said survey results indicate that 95 percent of residents are either somewhat, very or extremely satisfied.

"Overall, Ocean Pines residents are very satisfied and they're very likely to recommend Ocean Pines to others," he said.

Further, McGorry said 68.5 percent indicated being very or extremely satisfied

"The numbers speak for themselves," he said.

In total, 83 percent would recommend Ocean Pines as an ideal location to live for family or friends.

Survey rankings for the top five issues of importance start with 95.2 percent listing safety as very or extremely important, followed by maintenance of infrastructure at 94.2 percent, community aesthetics at 89.8 percent, assessment fee value at 83.1 percent and customer service at 83.2 percent.

McGorry said customer service ranked lower than assessment fee value on a 1-5 scale at 4.13 to 4.18.

"Customer service ranked fifth," he said. "It's something that we want to get better at."

The top five issues of importance are all at least meeting expectations.

"Safety was rated slightly above expectations," he said.

McGorry noted amenities failed to make the top five in terms of issues of importance to residents.

"People love the amenities, but a lot of people don't use them," he said. "They support continued investment in current amenities as opposed to investing in new amenities."

The survey also ranked community values.

"We benchmarked other communities," he said.

McGorry credited committee member Helen Johnson for taking charge to research similar homeowner associations in the region.

Topping the value list was integrity, with 86.4 percent ranking as very or extremely important, followed by accountability at 82.2 per-

cent, collaboration at 76.3 percent and sustainability at 74 percent.

In terms of the community's greatest challenges, transparency between the association and members ranked first at 86.7 percent, followed by infrastructure issues at 84.5 percent.

Next on the list was collaboration between the board and general manager at 80 percent, responsiveness to member requests followed at 76.9 percent, with enforcement of regulations at 66 percent.

McGorry said transparency, infrastructure and collaboration were seen as the top three challenges.

"The good news is transparency and collaboration don't cost a lot of money," he said.

Turning to amenities, McGorry said a minority of residents expressed interest in improving walkways, adding a fitness center and improving street lighting.

"My conclusion here is, in general, there was only lukewarm interest for any new or improved amenities," he said.

In terms of next steps, McGorry said further analysis is planned.

"We want to look at the data more in the next two months," he said.

Later this month, the committee will present a report to the Ocean Pines Executive Council, which is comprised of advisory committee chairs, and then a summary would be published in the January newsletter.

McGorry also recommended holding a town hall meeting in February to answer questions from residents.

McGorry said the full results of the survey should be posted on the association website in March.

Up through March, the Strategic Planning Committee will continue crafting long-range recommendations to present to the board in July.

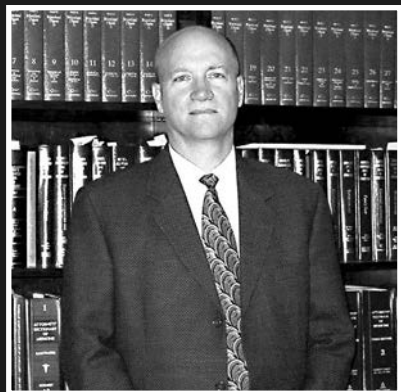
Director Doug Parks, noting integrity was listed as a high priority by residents, suggested the committee provide more details for future board reference.

"How do you measure ... evaluate and, obviously, report on integrity?" he said. "I would ask the committee for insights ... so we could make a decision if we had to."

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Conserve designation 'mistake'

Continued from Page 7

known in the county tax record as Parcel 80. In 1996, the planning commission approved site plans to turn Parcel 80 into a golf course, which eventually became the former Pine Shore South Golf Course. Today, its former clubhouse serves as the headquarters for the Maryland Coastal Bays Program.

"Everybody's happy (with the cur-

rent situation)," Cropper said. "There are no plans to change that."

Parcel 80 is now known as Ayres Creek Family Farm, which was purchased out of foreclosure by Burbage in 2014.

In 2017, Burbage abandoned an idea to convert the area into campgrounds and at the time said he was planning to move his family onto the property.

Berlin Briefs

By Greg Ellison

Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) the Berlin Town Council reviewed the following topics during its meeting on Monday.

Arts and Entertainment

Council members approved the establishment of a Berlin Arts and Entertainment Committee.

Mayor Zach Tyndall said the entity will revive efforts undertaken in the past.

"We have had an Arts and Entertainment Committee in the past [but] it's been an informal structure as it relates to our other town committees," he said.

Tyndall said Maryland Arts and Entertainment Districts are designed to foster community involvement and tourism tied to creative ventures.

"It will promote Berlin by attracting audiences, artists, arts organizations and other creative enterprises," he said.

Tyndall said committee members would implement strategies supported by the Arts and Entertainment District program.

"Members should devote attention to creating and supporting a diverse artistic and cultural atmosphere that preserves a sense of place," he said.

The advisory committee will be comprised of five members serving two-year terms.

Tyndall said the committee would provide recommendations for council consideration.

"The committee shall provide an annual report to the mayor and council," he said.

Employee holiday bonus

Council member Troy Purnell proposed reinstating a holiday bonus for town staff.

"I realized that we have not given any employee bonuses out for the last two years," he said.

Purnell said Berlin gave employees \$500 Christmas bonuses in both 2016 and 2017.

"I'd like to see the \$500 reinstated for this year," he said.

After Tyndall proposed compiling numbers for the payments before approving the payments, Purnell quickly estimated the cost at about \$37,400.

"There's room in all the contingency funds ... but I don't want to wait, I want to do it tonight," he said.

Tyndall said the town had recently distributed \$50 gift cards to town staff.

"If we wanted to reinstate bonuses from the past, allow us to put those numbers together for the next meeting," he said.

Councilman Dean Burrell said the next meeting would not take place until after the New Year.

"Did you make a motion?" he asked Purnell.

After confirming Purnell's motion, Burrell offered a second to approve a one-time \$500 payment for town staff.

Councilman Jack Orris recommended the issue be revisited during upcoming

budget discussions to avoid future last-minute approvals.

Council member Jay Knerr proposed cutting the sum in half.

"The fact that it's an unbudgeted item, I would recommend \$250," he said. "Troy, are you willing to compromise?"

Purnell held his ground, with both Burrell and Councilwoman Shaneka Nichols also voting to pass the measure, with Knerr opposed and Orris abstaining.

Aid for Kentucky

Electric Utility Director Tim Lawrence said Berlin was contacted by American Municipal Power to help with disaster cleanup in Kentucky in the wake of the tornados that wreaked havoc on the region this past weekend.

"I received a request today from AMP to provide mutual aid to the state of Kentucky for all the damage that occurred down there," he said.

Lawrence said officials estimate roughly 8,000 utility poles were leveled.

"We would be included with multiple municipalities in the rotation," he said.

Lawrence said initial estimates are two to three months to address the damage.

"Crews would go for a week and then maybe return again," he said. "If council approves, we would be leaving in early January."

Lawrence said Berlin has helped other locales when disaster struck.

"I look at it like if there's a point ... where we need their help, I could pick up the phone and they would be here in a minute," he said.

Town Administrator Jeff Fleetwood said the council approved the promotion of Jimmy Charles to Director of Public Works.

"Jimmy has been employed with the town a little over 10 months as superin-



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Jimmy Charles was promoted to director of Public Works by the Berlin mayor and Town Council during its meeting on Monday.

endent of public works," he said. "This evening the mayor and council have graciously promoted Jimmy to the director level."

No smoking ordinance

Council members voted unanimously to approve a no smoking ordinance for town parks.

Tyndall said rules and regulations for Berlin park facilities would be amended to include the smoking prohibition.

Town Attorney Dave Gaskill said the ordinance is fairly straightforward.

"We're just adding a rule to the parks that prohibits smoking or vaping of tobacco products, medical marijuana, illegal substances or any other substances in the town parks," he said.

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No year-round: White Horse updates bylaws

By Jack Chavez
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) The White Horse Park Community Association received confirmation from the Worcester County Commissioners on Dec. 7 that its members can update its declarations to state that long-term offseason dwelling in the RV and mobile-home community is prohibited.

The new language states that between Sept. 30 and April 1, no one may remain on the property for more than 30 consecutive days or a total of 60 days.

The WHPCA has long been at odds with about 30 of its 465 residents who have been living on their property year-round.

In 2019, the commissioners started enforcing a restriction on the residents that stipulated the same terms from the declarations they approved earlier this month.

Affected residents contended that simply moving to another location for half the year was infeasible due to various hardships.

After failing to work around the county by promoting new legislation, the residents sued the county on the grounds that the county gave up its right to fine the residents for violating



JACK CHAVEZ/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

The Worcester County Commissioners approved the White Horse Park Community Association's request to update their declarations to conform with the county code and bar residents from living in the community year round on Dec. 7. The ruling means that residents may not stay on their property within the community more than 30 straight days or a total of 60 days, from Sept. 30 to April 1.

the rules since it was common knowledge at the park that these residents were still in the community during the offseason. The community association joined the lawsuit on the county's side soon thereafter.

Attorney Hugh Cropper, who rep-

resents the full-time residents of White Horse Park, called the commissioners' ruling "punitive."

"My opinion on this case is the same as what it was two years ago — the commissioners should have made exceptions or variances for the people

who live at White Horse Park full time for many, many years," Cropper said. "This sort of continued effort to enforcement, in my opinion, is not necessary. There are still people in there who deserve to stay there until they voluntarily leave or pass away."

Commissioners narrowly pass amended CIP

By Jack Chavez
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) The Worcester County Commissioners on Dec. 7 narrowly passed an updated capital improvement plan by a vote of 4-3, along the same lines other recent CIP votes have fallen.

"Bond rating agencies look closely at the (CIP) as a financial tooling plan

for the county," said senior budgeting accountant Kim Reynolds. "This document is not a guarantee of funding for any specific project. It's a working document."

Reynolds then highlighted some of the changes that have been made, including the removal of tourism building renovation, Mystic Harbour sanitation service area projects have

been combined, and two Ocean Pines maintenance projects have been combined.

One resident spoke to the commissioners about the long-debated addition of a new athletic sports complex in the CIP.

Ocean City resident and former Ocean City Councilman Vince Gisriel said he found it "very disturbing" to see

it on the report.

"In 2017 you had a study done that indicated to you that ... you would have to subsidize it with government funds by 25 percent," Gisriel said. "If people who responded to surveys from that study indicated that there was a concern that the Mid-Atlantic region was already oversaturated with these facilities. ... You wisely in my judgment made a decision to defer that."

Gisriel said he was "sad to say" that Ocean City then went out to seek an opinion from those same consultants. Gisriel said he's been trying to get that study for "months" but only a week ago

See CIP Page 11

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OPA Board members honor Bennett

(Dec. 16, 2021) Ocean Pines Board members on Saturday honored retiring Senior Executive Assistant Michelle Bennett.

During a regular board meeting, Association President Larry Perrone thanked Bennett for 'her hard work and dedication over the last decade.'

Bennett would have celebrated her 10th year with Ocean Pines in April. She resigned on Nov. 30.

"Unfortunately, Michelle Bennett ... has tendered her resignation," Perrone said. "Most people probably don't

know, but Michelle works very closely with the board in addition to working directly for the general manager, so we have a little something for Michelle."

Perrone presented Bennett with a thank-you plaque, and board members posed for a photo with her.

General Manager John Viola released a statement about Bennett's resignation on Dec. 3.

"I am writing to you all today to announce the resignation of Michelle Bennett, effective Dec. 28, 2021. Michelle has been a trusted, highly val-

ued member of Ocean Pines Association for almost 10 years and has provided the General Manager's Office and the Board of Directors with excellent service.

"She has received an employment opportunity that will enable her to utilize her accounting experience fully," Viola said. "Michelle has been a great asset to Ocean Pines Association and will be missed very much. Please join me in wishing the very best to Michelle in her new career endeavor."

Bennett also released a brief statement, last week.

"I am excited to join a local private family-owned business, where I will utilize my accounting experience fully," she said. "I have enjoyed serving the Ocean Pines community for almost 10 years and will miss working with the team."



PHOTO COURTESY OPA
Ocean Pines Association Board honors retiring Senior Executive Assistant Michelle Bennett.

CIP includes athletic complex

Continued from Page 10

was it released by the Maryland Stadium Authority.

The report raises a lot of red flags, he said, including that that it lists multiple site locations and all but one require some sort of government subsidy.

"They just don't make a profit," Gisriel said.

Commissioner Chip Bertino asked if the county administration had finally determined if Project Open Space money would be available for an athletic complex.

"The short answer is there is money available," county Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young said. "The question now is how much or what the number is. We'll have to look it up, but there's (money) open for acquisition. It limits what you can do with the money because (this money) comes with strings."

Weston said the money could even depend on how much space goes to land acquisition. There could be a lot of strings for a little amount of money, he said, depending on the property's cost and what the program is willing to pay.

Bertino went on to point out that what's a headache for northern Worcester County could be a welcome shot in the arm for the southern half.

"If what we've been told is true, that this will be a boon for the area, I ques-

tion that," Bertino said. "I'm not subscribing to that. But if that is the case and ... I believe we have not provided enough emphasis to the southern part of this county, this could be a huge undertaking and given the challenges that exist below Newark in the southern part of the county ... the results in the southern part of the county would be an asset and boon for an area that for so long has not gotten the attention I believe it deserves."

Bertino stressed he still doesn't believe government money should be involved at all.

Bertino then moved to accept the amended CIP but remove from it the athletic sports complex and public safety building, the motion failed 3-4.

Commissioner Nordstrom then moved to accept the amended CIP as-is, which passed 4-3. Commissioners Bertino, Ted Elder and Jim Bunting opposed an exact inverse of the first vote.

Commissioner Joe Mitrecic closed the public hearing with a reminder about a similar costly project that isn't receiving opposition.

"I will say that—and I cannot leave this alone—that this sports complex was a little over \$15 million, which is what the addition to Stephen Decatur Middle School is costing us as opposed to what the \$1 million it would have cost us when we built that building," he said. "So I do have to bring that forward."

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County funds park upgrades for \$1 million

By Jack Chavez
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) The Worcester County Commissioners on Dec. 7 approved \$1 million in spending on local parks and playground infrastructure, including \$860,000 for the Northern Worcester Athletic Complex lighting project.

The breakdown of the spending besides the lighting project is \$55,000 for fencing extension and a batting cage at Showell Park, \$35,000 for the batting cage at John Walter Smith Park and \$25,000 each for the Stockton Park fencing project and the bullpens at the Northern Worcester Athletic Complex.

Only one of the three soccer fields at the athletic complex has lights, said Recreation and Parks Director Kelly O'Brien-Rados. That has led to its overuse and the county having to turn away people trying to reserve playing time.

"This is separate from any (existing Project Open Space) application," she told the commissioners. "It does follow very similar policies with the exception that it is 100 percent reimbursable."



JACK CHAVEZ/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

The Worcester County Commissioners approved a request for \$1 million in funding for four park projects around the county on Dec. 7, including two at the Northern Worcester Athletic Complex off Route 113 in Berlin, which will install lights on two soccer fields and bullpens for the Senior League baseball field.

Project Open Space, Maryland's top land reservation program, stipulates that projects must be located on land owned or controlled by the county, be 100 percent accessible to the general public and be used for de-

velopment — not acquisition.

Acceptable uses entail design, construction and capital equipment for both indoor and outdoor park infrastructure.

"And to the greatest extent, it must

be completed within (FY22)," Rados said.

The fencing extension for the Showell Park project is intended to protect people by the concession stands from batted balls.

Veto override to stop county ICE detainee program in '22

By Mallory Panuska
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) Worcester County's days of housing federal immigration detainees are officially numbered.

In an anticipated move during a special session of the General Assembly last week, members of the Democrat-heavy legislature voted to override Gov. Larry Hogan's veto of a bill that imposes a solid end date to the state's participation in a federal program that provides funding to the county to house people detained on immigration matters.

House Bill 16 requires the two counties — Worcester and Frederick — that still hold contracts with the

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, or ICE, to end them by Oct. 1, 2022.

The measure passed the legislature last session, but Hogan's veto kept the counties' participation in the program alive. Majority votes in both the House and Senate on Dec. 7, however, overrode the veto, thus cutting off a large chunk of the Worcester County jail's annual revenue.

The move was expected, but will still force county officials to finagle the budget for the detention center to make up for a loss that at one point exceeded \$5 million annually.

According to a letter the county commissioners sent in February to

See JAIL Page 13



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Jail received millions from federal program

Continued from Page 12

members of the Eastern Shore delegation, the detention center housed roughly 200 immigration-related detainees under contract with ICE since 1999. The program generated significant revenue for the jail, accounting for \$5.1 million of its total \$9.2 million budget in fiscal 2019, \$3.5 million in fiscal 2020 and \$4 million in fiscal 2021.

The 2022 budget included a little under \$1.5 million from the program, a \$2.5 million decrease from the previous year, in anticipation of the passage of House Bill 16.

Hogan's veto allowed the county to get through another budget cycle before the contract ends, but Tuesday's override brought it back to the chopping block.

County officials said during budget talks that they will be considering the need of every position within the jail to make up for the lost revenue.

Del. Wayne Hartman (R- 38C) and Sen. Mary Beth Carozza (R-38) fought hard to continue the program last session. They opposed the passage of the bill and even tried to pass an amendment to exempt Worcester County, to no avail.

Hartman cited concerns with not

only the loss of revenue for the detention center, but with safety, as he said the detainees who are housed in the jail are serious criminals who will be released without the program.

Carozza has said that the passage of the bill paves the way for Maryland to become a sanctuary state. Hogan also made that point in his veto letter in reference the overall immigration-related bill.

"As I have stated throughout my time in office, I remain steadfast in my opposition to any legislative or regulatory efforts that would hinder cooperation with federal law enforcement and make Maryland a sanctuary state," he said in the letter. "It is neither the state's, nor the legislature's, place to decide whether to comply with federal law and regulations."

Supporters of the legislation have said it is needed to fix the state's broken immigration enforcement practices, which have resulted in people fearing for their lives and safety.

Kim Moses, Worcester County's public information officer and the only member of the staff authorized to speak to the press, did not return a request for comment in time for this story.



FILE PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Members of the General Assembly voted last week to override Gov. Larry Hogan's veto to a bill that ends a federal program that provides money to Worcester County to house immigration detainees. The program is set to end in October, stopping payments in the millions to the county jail.

N.O.E.L. Community to offer Christmas dinner, Dec. 23

(Dec. 16, 2021) The N.O.E.L. (Nothing Other than Eating and Loving) Community is excited to be able to provide food for area residents for Christmas again this year.

While a big part of the Christmas Day dinner, now in its 24th year, allows for entertainment and social gathering, the group has again modified its outreach this Christmas to ensure safety for everyone involved.

On Thursday, Dec. 23, between the hours of 10 a.m. and noon, the N.O.E.L. Community will distribute bags filled with non-perishable goods and some traditional food items to prepare at home.

A special bag will be provided for those who are not able to prepare food at home.

Bags will be distributed at St. Paul's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church on Third Street and Baltimore Avenue, at the main entrance to the Church Hall (separate entrance than Shepherd's Crook).

Those picking up bags are asked to wear masks.

For more information about the N.O.E.L. Community or this event, contact the office at St. Paul's by-the-Sea at 410-289-3453. To make a donation to the N.O.E.L. Community, send to: The N.O.E.L. Community c/o St. Paul's by the Sea, 302 N. Baltimore Avenue, Ocean City, Maryland 21842.

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Talkie briefs commissioners on construction

By Jack Chavez
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) Talkie co-CEOs and brothers Andrew and Andre DeMattia stopped by the Worcester County Commissioners meeting on Dec. 7 to offer updates on their company's efforts to connect the whole county to high-speed internet.

At their starting point of Dun Swamp in Pocomoke City, Talkie's office, which will be the main headquarters for their broadband services in the county, has been fully connected for about two or three weeks, Talkie co-CEO Andrew DeMattia said.

When it comes to the northern end of the county, Bishopville is the area they're targeting to hit first.

"We got our remote electronics in just last week, which is a remote central office ... that deploys the internet," Andrew DeMattia said. "We're going to be putting it into Bishopville. We're thinking it'll take about three months to get power up to it. We haven't (talked to) the local power company ... but we're assuming they're all pretty similar. These remote cabinets will give up about a 12-mile reach. Every 24 miles is about where these remote cabinets need to be put."

"We're expecting three or four remote cabinets in the entire county, which will cover (all of Worcester). From there we just build out from the cabinet to the different rural areas."

Commissioner Jim Bunting asked about northern county aspects of their update and a possible timeline for connections.

"I think we'll know more after today," Andrew DeMattia said. "The remote cabinets generally take about six to eight months to get and we ordered that a long time ago. That came in, we just got our cement slabs, some parts we need."



PHOTO COURTESY WORCESTER COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Representatives from Talkie Communications, local residents and Worcester County Commissioners Josh Nordstrom, Diana Purnell and Ted Elder celebrate hooking up seven residents on rural Dun Swamp Road in Pocomoke City to broadband internet on Nov. 15. While work in the southern half of the county continues, Talkie is now also setting its sights on the northern half and, specifically, the Bishopville area.

But they expect it to be January, added Andre DeMattia.

"Once the (remote control office) is turned on, once that's ready to go, the construction will start building the conduit out and that's when everyone will be hooked up," Andre DeMattia said. "We have a lot of demand in Bishopville, a lot of homeowners associations we've spoken to and they've contacted all their neighbors and everyone's signed up."

Andre DeMattia pointed out also that grant money, while it's coming, has not been released yet and the work they're doing is all on their dime at the moment.

Commissioner Ted Elder asked just how much grant money is out there for Talkie, to which Andre DeMattia said there's \$67 million for all of Maryland and Delaware and \$6.6 million for Worcester County.

Much of the cost they've had to deal with so far has been room and board for their workers. They also

said they did not anticipate that being so expensive in Worcester County.

"We're hoping the (Rural Digital Opportunity Fund) money to be replaced next month," Andre DeMattia continued. "But with the federal gov-

ernment, all can you do is sit and hope."

In addition, \$2.6 million is coming from last year's infrastructure grant through Maryland, but it has yet to be released.

County accepts merged and updated critical area codes

By Jack Chavez
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) Three months after the Worcester County Department of Environmental Programs introduced plans to merge the Atlantic Coastal Bays and Chesapeake Critical Area programs, the commissioners unanimously approved those changes on Dec. 7.

The bill now goes to the state Critical Area Commission for review be-

fore coming back before the commissioners for final passage.

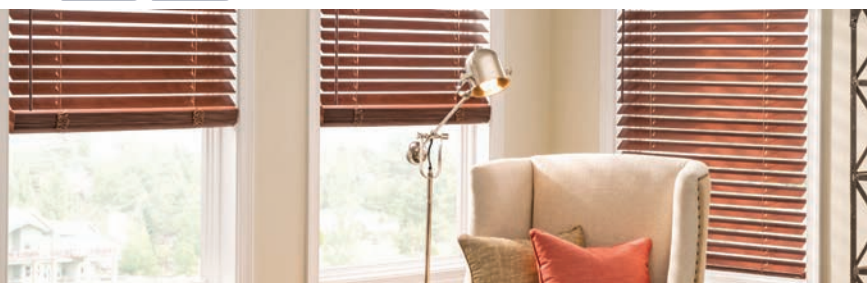
The new legislation was discussed during a special legislative session in which no resident volunteered to speak in support or opposition.

"The legislation was prepared to update the code to reflect changes in state laws since the ordinances were last comprehensively updated," Environmental Programs Director Bob

See UPDATED Page 15



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ALDI slated to open in Berlin this Thursday

Unique German discount grocery chain store first for company in Worcester Co.

(Dec. 16, 2021) The grocery store chain ALDI will open its first store at 11330 Samuel Bowen Blvd. in Berlin on Dec. 16, as part of its aggressive national expansion.

ALDI operates more than 2,100 stores in 37 states and is on track to become the third-largest U.S. grocery retailer by store count by the end of 2022.

The ALDI business model is intentionally different. ALDI focuses on offering shoppers the best products at the lowest possible prices, and Berlin shoppers can make that assessment for themselves when the new Berlin

store opens on Thursday, at 8:30 a.m. The store will be open daily from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

“We are excited to open our first ALDI location in Berlin and introduce area shoppers to the high-quality, fresh foods we offer at low prices in every aisle of the store, every day,” said Jeff Baehr, Frederick regional vice president for ALDI.

“The ALDI business model is designed to provide exceptional products at unbeatable prices, and we look forward to serving Berlin customers for many years to come,” Baehr continued.

For the past 10 years, ALDI has held the title of “Value Leader” among U.S. grocery stores, according to the Market Force Information U.S. Grocery Competitive Study.



The grocery store chain ALDI will open its first store at 11330 Samuel Bowen Blvd. in Berlin, on Dec. 16.

JACK CHAVEZ/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Updated bays critical area code off to CAC

Continued from Page 14

Mitchell told the commissioners. “It was also done to simplify the program for our citizens, contractors and property owners. It will also provide parity for the Chesapeake Bay critical area property owners for items that we have approved in use for coastal bays critical properties.

“Again, it simplifies the code and combination of ordinances and updates according to state law that have happened since the previous adoption of the local ordinance. It does not include additional regulations over and above what the commissioners have agreed to in prior amendments.”

Mitchell also provided the commissioners with transcripts from two town halls regarding the updates — one in the southern county and one on the north end.

Jenelle Gerthoffer, natural resources administrator for Environmental Programs, gave a presentation that highlighted the components of the updates.

“The big question is why now? There’ve been changes to the state critical area law, some of which have not been reflected in our county ordinance,” Gerthoffer said. “The Critical Area Commission recently completed a county-model ordinance, which has given us this opportunity to update our local code.”

Some changes include an expanded and mitigated buffer establishment within resource conservation areas, the term “lot coverage” now replaces the term “imperious surface,” added after-the-fact variance language like when fined and notified violators go in front of the Board of Zoning Appeals and language used to protect significant habitat areas within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas will now be used for their Atlantic bays counterparts as

well.

Any growth allocations will still go to the Planning Commission before the county commissioners.

While no county residents spoke, the Maryland Coastal Bays Program did submit a letter of support that Mitchell read.

“It is our understanding that this update will result in a clearer program for the public, provide a more efficient program for county staff to administer and not result in any reduction or protection in the coastal bays critical area,” the letter read. The Atlantic coastal bays critical area ... is

an essential aspect of our shared commitment to the conservation and restoration of Maryland’s coastal bays. It helps to ensure there’s a balance between the pressures of development and the protection of shoreline, habitats and wetland quality.”

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Snapshots



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CHARACTER DAY

Students at Worcester Preparatory School celebrated spirit week Oct. 4-9, by dressing accordingly to each day of the week's theme. Pictured, standing from left during Character Day, are Brice Richins, Jarett Sofronski, Marshall Mumford, Austin Cannon, Jordan Willey and Riley Schoch, and kneeling, Bennett Tinkler, Anderson Taylor and Tristan Weinstein.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Students at Worcester Preparatory School celebrated spirit week Oct. 4-9, by dressing accordingly to each day of the week's theme. A mixture of upper school grades joined in on the Harry Potter theme. Pictured, standing from left during Character Day, are Morgan Schoch, Lily Baeurle, Ava Nally, Annie Carter, Sophie Haines, Sumira Sehgal, Natalie Brushmiller and Izzy Huber, and kneeling, Anna Carpenter, Morgan White, Claire Windrow and Caitlin Williams.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

CLASS COLORS

Students at Worcester Preparatory School celebrated spirit week Oct. 4-9, by dressing accordingly to each day of the week's theme. Pictured, from left, showing off their class colors, are freshmen Nazi Vnal, Jayden Scopp, Danielle Carr, Avery Roselle, Lilly Doran, Maxine Ruggerio, Emma Zajdel and Bella Marinelli.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Students at Worcester Preparatory School celebrated spirit week Oct. 4-9, by dressing accordingly to each day of the week's theme. Pictured, from left, showing off their class colors, are seniors Natalie Brushmiller, Sophie Haines and Anna Carpenter.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

PUMPKIN PALOOZA

Oakley's Mobile Pumpkin Palooza out of Hebron, Maryland, visited Worcester Preparatory School on Oct. 18. Pictured, from left, are Georgia Duffie, Ellie Bookwalter, Lilly Brittingham, Carter Merryman, Wesley DeVito, Emery Anthony, Emily Leiner and Adee Carmean.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Oakley's Mobile Pumpkin Palooza out of Hebron, Maryland, visited Worcester Preparatory School on Oct. 18. Pictured, are Emily Hafeli, Elle Wilsey, Madison Andrews and Kristie Carr.

Snapshots



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

BABY BOUTIQUE

Several members of the "Knifty Knitters" group from the Ateaze Senior Center in Baltimore recently delivered hand-crocheted items for the Baby Boutique at the Grace Center for Maternal and Women's Health in Berlin. The group has been providing items such as baby blankets, hats and dolls for Grace Center clients for several years. Pictured are Knifty Knitters Ronnie Schuman, Gerrie Smith, Janet Kivett and Bobbie Hollingsworth, accompanied by Amy Mike, a volunteer and former board member at the center.



CRAFTER RECOGNIZED

The Pine'er Craft Club of Ocean Pines chose Carol Quinto as the December Crafter of the Month. Born and raised in New Jersey, Quinto and her husband, Phil, retired and moved to Ocean Pines in 2004. She joined the Pine'er Craft Club and discovered she had a passion for making handmade items. A self-taught sewer, Quinto began making items to sell in the Pine'er Artisan Gift Shop, but quickly expanded her craft to include machine embroidery, painted porcelain China and fabric decoupage plates. In addition, Quinto has chaired the summer and holiday craft fairs and served as vice president and manager of the gift shop. She currently serves as gift shop treasurer. To see the items she has created and those of other crafters in the group, visit the Artisan Gift Shop, located next to the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market in White Horse Park. The shop is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The shop will be open Dec. 17 for extra holiday shopping.

SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE



PHOTO COURTESY D.J. LANDIS, SR.E

GUEST SPEAKER

Billy Hamilton, owner of Hamilton Physical Therapy in Pennington Commons, left, was recently the guest speaker for the Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City at the weekly Wednesday 8 a.m. meeting in the community center. He is pictured with Kiwanis Club President Tim Lund.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

ATHLETES RECOGNIZED

Stephen Decatur High School Premier Driving School Athletes of the Month for October were seniors Tristan Dutton (cross country) and Emma Johnson (volleyball). They are pictured with Premier representative Kelly Sisk and Principal Tom Sites.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

SCIENCE LESSON

Verena Chase with Assateague Coastal Trust's Coast Kids program visited Lindsey MacWha's sixth grade science class to present "What's in the Water" on Oct. 27. During the program students learned about point and non-point sources of water pollution, and how to perform basic water quality measurements.

Opinion

Please send all letters and other editorial submissions to editor@baysidegazette.com by 5 p.m. Monday.

No easy solutions for short-term rental rule

Berlin, like many other municipalities, cities and counties, is trying to balance a scale that has property owners' desire to earn income from short-term rentals on one side and traditionalists' wish to preserve their long-held sense of community on the other.

The fulcrum on which this debate teeters is what property law experts call the "bundle of sticks" collection of property rights. They use that metaphor to show that each of these rights is a separate stick that may be altered or removed without disturbing the other sticks, or rights, contained in the bundle.

The problem, however, is that these property rights aren't well defined in a legal sense, but in this country are based more on a publicly accepted, even embraced, concept that dates back to the frontier days.

This explains why the argument over how far property rights extend has been going on in this country for more than 200 years. The frontier-based notion that an owner can do whatever he or she wants to do with a dwelling (barring the separate bundle of land use restrictions) has run smack into a wall of compactly developed neighborhoods, whose residents have their own sticks they want to preserve — the right to the peaceable enjoyment of their properties.

Whose rights should prevail? That's a question the courts haven't been able to agree on, since most lawsuits for and against short-term rentals have turned not on the ephemeral matter of property rights, but on errors and omissions in the court filings and more narrowly defined constitutional questions.

There is no right answer that the Berlin mayor and council can simply pick up and employ. No matter what the mayor and council do, some people will be unhappy. That's just the way it is, and the best town officials can do is to prepare for that eventuality.



"It was only a matter of time."

Letter

OPA should adopt minimum wage

This letter was sent to the Ocean Pines Association Board and forwarded to Bayside Gazette

Members of the Board:

On March 20, 2019, the Maryland General Assembly passed a new state minimum wage law. The law raises the state's minimum wage from \$10.10 to \$15 by 2025.

For example, in just three short weeks the new law requires large employers to pay a minimum wage \$12.50 per hour.

If I was still on the board

I would have already submitted a motion requiring \$15 minimum wage for OPA FTE employees effective Jan. 1, 2022.

My reason is based on the current rate of inflation and on two key issues which present major risk to the inflation outlook.

They are namely an ongoing labor supply/demand challenges in the service sector and the recent increases in housing prices which are forecasted to continue into 2022.

Therefore, I encourage the board to take a bold position by approving the \$15 minimum wage promptly.

It is my hope the board will act in unison on this minimum wage issue. This will send a clear message to the OPA employees; that they are our most important asset.

The below web link is provided for your convenience. Maryland Department of Labor states that employers are required by law to post this information: <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/labor/wages/minimumwagelaw.pdf>

Wishing everyone healthy and joyful holiday season!

*Sincerely,
Slobodan Trendic
Ocean Pines*

Worcester Rec Parks holiday events

(Dec. 16, 2021) Worcester County Department of Recreation and Parks is offering two holiday events, where the community is invited to skate with friends and family during Skate with Santa and an open skate.

Skate with Santa is a free family event on Dec. 22, at Sturgis Park on River Street in Snow Hill from 6-8 p.m. Attendees will have the opportunity to ice skate, decorate ornaments, hop on a train ride, enjoy festive music, sip on hot chocolate and get a picture with Santa. This event is open to all ages.

The ice rink will be set up at Sturgis Park for open skate, Dec. 27-30 from noon to 7 p.m. It is free to skate, compliments of Ann Sturgis-Coates and Randy Coates.

Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Children 6 and under are not permitted to skate without an adult on the ice with them.

For more information on the skating events, contact Tyler Keiser at 410-632-2144 x2505 or tkeiser@maryland-scoast.org. For a full list of special events or recreation programming, visit www.playmarylandscoast.org.

BAYSIDE GAZETTE

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Wor. Co. BOE hears FY23 budget wish lists

By Mallory Panuska
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) In order to offer the best educational experience, a school district must attract and retain quality teachers and support staff.

That was the main takeaway gleaned from the budget wish lists representatives from all 14 Worcester County Public Schools presented Dec. 7 to members of the board of education.

“It’s very important for Worcester County to retain and recruit and hire the best teachers, and to find a way to give the teachers a step and pay raise,” Stephen Decatur High School representative Colby Phillips said during the meeting. “... I do acknowledge that we are the highest in local funding and that is appreciated, however the time and commitment put into teaching our children needs to be compensated at the highest level.”

While generous, competitive teacher salaries are always at the top of the wish lists, representatives pointed out that the added stress of covid-19 over the past two school years have highlighted staff’s hard work and dedication, thus further justifying the need for better pay.

“I can assure you that your teachers are working harder than ever,” Worcester County Teachers Association President Beth Shockley-Lynch said during the meeting. “They are dealing with more obstacles than they ever imagined, they are trying to manage the stresses the children are coming to school with. They’re working with our families that have different needs as a result of the pandemic and they are constantly assessing the needs of our kids as they continue to learn. You all know there’s so much more to teaching than just a book.”

Each year, members of the school board hold a public meeting to hear from school and organization representatives, and the public, to develop the annual budget.

Carrie Sterrs, the district’s coordinator of public relations and special programs, said in an email that officials will use the comments received

from a parent survey conducted in November and information collected during last week’s meeting to help shape the upcoming 2023 budget, which will go into effect July 1.

Board members will hold a work session in early February to develop the details of the budget before voting on it in March. At the same time, officials will be finalizing negotiations with members of the Worcester County Teachers Association and Worcester County Education Support Personnel Association.

“Our proposed budget then goes before the county commissioners, as they are our primary funding agency, where our budget becomes a portion of their budget approval process,” Sterrs explained.

Vince Tolbert, the chief financial officer of Worcester County Public Schools, presented preliminary numbers for both cost of living and step increases for staff during Tuesday’s meeting, but said that the numbers will not be finalized until the budget is developed.

Besides teacher salaries, representatives asked officials to maintain small class sizes, continue supporting technology funding, finance necessary capital improvements, and support after-school and early programs, among other requests.

Ahead of Tuesday’s meeting, parents and guardians participated in an anonymous survey to help district officials develop their budgetary priorities. The online questionnaire solicited comments on things like the quality of educational programs and support services, and the school improvement process. Parents were asked to indicate which school or schools their child or children attend and their races and ethnicities to specify the results.

A total of 1,963 responses were received from a potential pool of 3,651 households, giving an overall return rate of 53.7 percent. While the survey was not completed for the 2020-21 school year because of covid, the percentage of responses this year exceeded years past, with just 48

percent of households responding in 2019, 52 percent in 2018, and 42, 43 and 41 percent response rates in 2017, 2016 and 2015, respectively.

According to the 2021 results, favorability ratings were high in nearly every category, with percentages pretty closely mirroring those calculated in 2019 in most instances.

“As you can see, we’re doing really well,” Sterrs said while presenting the results of the survey during Tuesday’s meeting.

The results showed that instructional programs and services remained about even in most cases, with only early childhood education, health, physical education and technology education dropping by just a couple of percentage points since 2019. On the other hand, library and media, science, special education, and world languages programs went up slightly in favorability. All of the programs received 95 percent or higher ratings.

The results showed that in a series of open-ended responses, several parents expressed a desire to see the world and foreign languages program expanded to include more languages and offerings.

The parents who responded to the survey also gauged supplemental program favorability, which remained in



MALLORY PANUSKA/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Willie Brown, a representative from Pocomoke Elementary School, speaks to members of the Worcester County Board of Education about budget priorities for the school during a meeting held Dec. 7 to gauge public feedback on the public school district’s fiscal 2023 finances.

the low 90th percentiles in most cases with only athletic programs dropping to 87 percent from 89 in 2019.

See PARENT Page 20



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State BOE approves plans for de-masking

By Mallory Panuska
Staff Writer

(Dec. 16, 2021) There is a light at the end of the tunnel for removing a statewide school mask mandate, and it hinges on high vaccination and low covid transmission rates.

Members of the state board of education voted Dec. 7 to publish an emergency order that would implement "off ramps," or points of exit, to allow local districts to lift indoor mask mandates if specific thresholds are met.

Board members voted 12 to one to

pass the order, which could go to a General Assembly committee for a hearing before final approval. If the order ultimately passes, it would replace the current emergency order requiring face coverings for everyone inside school buildings set for expiration Feb. 25.

"The proposed regulation implements procedures to end face coverings based on vaccination status and case numbers of the county," State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudury said during last week's meeting.

The order maps out three pathways for de-masking, which are listed as follows:

Pathway 1: Allows district officials to lift mask mandates in individual schools if they meet an 80 percent vaccination rate for students and staff members.

Pathway 2: Allows the board of education to lift mask mandates for all schools if the county's vaccination rate is at or above 80 percent.

Pathway 3: Gives the county superintendent authority to lift the mask mandate if the health department reports 14 consecutive days of low or moderate countywide transmission rates.

Choudury said that the pathways were developed based on data and information from other states that have implemented them.

For example, he said officials in Massachusetts have implemented the 80 percent vaccination pathway to be able to successfully remove masking requirements at 30 schools. He said the change has not caused an increase in cases and resulted in healthy children who are excited to learn in person.

In Nevada, officials have implemented the transmission rate thresholds, which he said have also been successful.

While Maryland officials could have chosen just one or two options, Choudury said it made more sense to offer all three.

"That's how we have constructed it, three pathways to get there," he said. "... Transmission rates can drop; you don't have to necessarily get vaccinated, but there is strong

correlation around counties who are dropping transmission rates while the population is highly vaccinated. But you could not. You could just make sure you are staying home when you are sick, make sure you're in well-ventilated areas, make sure you are doing all of the layered strategies and you can get there as a community."

In Worcester County, according to the latest health department data, the covid case rate was 7.48 percent, which is considered a substantial risk. According to Atlantic General Hospital officials, the percentage of county residents who were fully vaccinated as of Wednesday was 64.09 percent. In turn, the county does not meet the necessary thresholds.

"At this time, Worcester County Public Schools (WCPS) does not meet any of the criteria to qualify for the 'off-ramps' from the face covering requirements in school facilities," Carrie Sterrs, the district's coordinator of public relations and special programs, said in an email. "However, officials will continue to closely monitor the data points set forth in the proposed regulation and will develop a strategy to address the off-ramps in the event that WCPS nears eligibility."

At Worcester Preparatory School, which as a private institution is not required to follow the state guidelines, Head of School John McDonald said Dec. 8 that the board of trustees is set to meet this week to discuss details of the mask mandate. He added that Worcester Prep officials monitor the state's metrics and advice and take those assessments into account when making decisions.

Parent survey ranks priorities

Continued from Page 19

Support services such as meal planning, guidance and health were also deemed as favorable in 2021 as in 2019, along with school grounds and facilities, with the numbers relatively high in all categories.

As for budget priorities, the survey results showed that parents ranked small class sizes, competitive teacher salaries, and high levels of achievement the highest, while renovating or rebuilding aging facilities and after-school programs ranked lowest.

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Cuisine

Enjoy hearty pot roast on cold, winter day

Thank goodness it is so chilly outside. I can't imagine what it would be like to celebrate Christmas in Florida or Costa Rica, although I do want to try it one of these years. Who knows? It might be fun after all.

With the temperatures dropping (for the sake of this article, please disregard Maryland's bi-polar weather patterns of hot-cold-hot-cold for the time being), it thus becomes the perfect time for heartier meals. And as this time of year often coincides with school, kids and the holidays, who wouldn't want to



By Paul Suplee,
MBA, CEC, PC-3

make a simple, one-pot meal?

There are plenty of meals like this, but pot roast is one of my absolute favorites. With its stick-to-your-ribs body and unctuous nature, it satiates the most primal of hungers during the winter months. With the addition of demi-glace, a specialty ingredient that you should mass-produce and freeze in little bags for late use, this dish is maddeningly delicious.

As for the demi-glace, do some research. There are plenty of recipes out there, but I will say that cooking it longer will yield a better product. As I create my original beef or veal stock, from which demi is derived, I let it go all night on a low simmer, topping off with water if it evaporates too much. There is collagen in them that bones, and the longer you go, the more you will leech out. Overnight works best.

From this stock comes the majestic Sauce Espagnole, which then gets transformed into your demi-glace. On occasion, I will make a large batch of this and then freeze it in vacuum bags to be used later. After vacuum-packing, you can lay them flat and freeze them, and they are good for months on end. And once you get in the habit of doing this, it will be much less cumbersome than it seems.

As for the beef to use in a pot roast, chuck is the all-time victor. There is tremendous flavor in the chuck, and notwithstanding the Teres Major, or Chuck Tender, it is a tough cut of meat that benefits greatly from long cooking times. Thus, it becomes the champion of the slow cooker.

You can see that this will be a rich dish. It is not for the faint of heart, and certainly not to be taken in a thermos to the beach on a hot August day. I laugh a little thinking about cracking that thermos open as sand blows in my face, sweat running down my neck. No, let's save this one for the frosty months.

Although now I wonder if pot roast is a thing in Florida. That might very well make my decision as to whether I retire there. I think I need to make a phone call.

Pot Roast

serves up to 6

3# high-quality Chuck roast
Salt & Pepper, to taste
2 Tbsp. Whole butter



1 Tbsp. EV Olive oil
3 ea. Medium carrots, peeled and cut into large chunks
3 ea. Stalks celery, whole (to be removed)
3 cloves garlic, smashed and finely minced
1 ea. Medium white onion, peeled and cut into large chunks
1 c. Dry red wine
6 ea. Red potatoes, halved
1 c. Beef broth
2 c. Beef demi-glace
2" Fresh rosemary
2 Fresh thyme sprigs

1. Set up a slow-cooker if you do not want to mess with a Dutch oven or covered pot in the oven. Either way is suitable, and while you might notice a difference in cooking this traditionally, I am going to go with the slow cooker as I can set and forget.

2. On the stovetop, heat a fry or sauté pan and add the butter and olive oil, melting the butter and waiting for the foaming to subside.

3. Season the chuck with salt and pepper, and carefully place it in the pan and sear on all sides. Make sure that you have a nice crust and some great color on the roast. This will determine the level of flavor in your finished dish. Just make sure that you are not burning it.

4. With all sides seared, place the roast in the

slow cooker and replace the pan on the burner to heat it up again. Add the carrots, celery, garlic and onion and cook until you have some color on those as well.

5. At this point, you will have a respectable fond in the pan (all of that stuff that is stuck to the bottom). With the pan hot again, add the wine to deglaze the pan and scrape all of those flavors out.

6. When the wine is reduced by half, add the broth and mix well.

7. Scrape everything into the slow cooker onto the roast and add the remaining ingredients.

8. Cover and cook on high for about 3 hours. Of course, this will change depending on the size of the roast, so give yourself plenty of time.

9. When finished, remove the celery stalks, rosemary stalks and thyme and discard.

10. Remove the roast and pick the fat off, discarding that. If you want to put in the extra work, you can strain the sauce to make it extra-smooth. That is completely optional.

11. Your one-pot meal is now done and ready to serve, barring any seasoning that you would like to do at this point to get it right where you want it.

—Paul Suplee is a Professor of Culinary Arts at Wor-Wic Community College and owner of *boxcar40* and *boxcar on main*. Visit him at www.boxcar40.com; www.boxcaronmain.com

Calendar

Please send calendar items to editor@baysidegazette.com by 5 p.m. Monday. All community-related activities will be published at no charge.

Thurs., Dec. 16

CPAP MASK FITTING

Atlantic General Hospital's Sleep Disorders Diagnostic Center, 9733 Healthway Drive, Berlin. For patients who are having trouble adjusting to their CPAP equipment. Free service, but requires an appointment. Appointments: Robin Rohlfing, 410-641-9726.

STORY TIME 'WHAT WE WEAR'

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and rhymes. Take-home activity included. For ages 2-5 years. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

STORY TIME: MR. JAKE'S FAVES

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Come listen to another one of Mr. Jake's favorite stories: "Clifford's First Snow Day" by Norman Bridwell. Take-home activity included. For ages 2-5 years. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 11 a.m. The workshop starts with a 20-minute lesson on genealogy research by Tom Dempsey followed by a Q&A session. Register: www.worcesterlibrary.org under "Events" or 410-208-4014.

ZUMBA FOR ALL LEVELS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4:30-5:30 p.m. Join certified Zumba instructor Joyce Landsman for an hour of movement. These classes uplift and improve mood. Register: www.worcesterlibrary.org under "Events." 410-632-2600

ENTERTAINING ON A BUDGET

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 5:30 p.m. Review entertaining and cooking tips that will elevate your festivities without spending a lot of money. Bring a pen and pad. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

BEACH SINGLES

Thursdays - Harpoon Hanna's, 39064 Harpoon Road, Fenwick Island, DE, 4-6 p.m. Beach Singles, 45 years and older, meet for happy hour. Info: 302-436-9577, 410-524-0649 or BeachSingles.org

Fri., Dec. 17

GOOGLE APPS 101

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m.-noon. Drop in and learn how to use some of Google's many features such as Google Sheets, Google Calendar and Google Drive. Feel free to bring your own elec-

tronic device. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

BERLIN BOOK OF THE MONTH: 'RADIUM GIRLS' BY KATE MOORE

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 2 p.m. Lively discussion facilitated by Cynthia Hanagud and Gail Samis of Salisbury University. Copies of the book are available at the Berlin branch. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

OCEAN 98.1 FM LISTENER & SEACRETS CUSTOMER APPRECIATION CHRISTMAS PARTY

Seacrets, 117 49th St., Ocean City, 5-10 p.m. Free and open to those 21 years and older. Featuring 6 local and touring artists, complimentary appetizers, food and drink specials, 50/50 and Chinese auction. Toy donations accepted. www.ocean98.com, 410-723-3683

ANNUAL LIVE NATIVITY

Mariner's Bethel United Methodist, 81 Central Ave., Ocean View, 6-8 p.m. Featuring the Christmas Story told and retold every half hour. Presented outside with Christmas carols, music, hot chocolate and refreshments by the fire. 302-539-9510, www.marinersbethel.org.

FREE DRIVE-IN MOVIE & LASER SHOW

John Walter Smith Park, 6022 Public Landing Road, Snow Hill, 7 p.m. Featuring "The Santa Clause." Vehicle parking begins at 6 p.m. Laser show to follow movie. Tyler Keiser, 410-632-2144, Ext. 2505, tkeiser@marylandscoast.org, www.playmarylandscoast.org

Sat., Dec. 18

VIRTUAL WALK WITH A DOC

A short presentation by one of AGH's providers on AGH's Facebook page, 9 a.m. Then walk wherever you'd like and share your selfie with hashtag #walkedwithagh. Tina Simmons, tsimmons@atlanticgeneral.org

SANTA IN THE SAND

Ocean Pines Beach Club, 49th Street, Ocean City, 9-11 a.m. Santa Claus available for photos with people and pets. Free parking and goody bags for the kids. The Chamber is asking for a \$10 donation (cash or Venmo). 410-641-5306, info@oceanpineschamber.org

FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET

Saturdays - White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway, 9:00 a.m. to noon. Shop for everything from fresh local produce to unique handmade artisan goods. Open to the public.

CRAFTY SATURDAY: HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m.

Make some awesome crafts and decorations perfect for the holiday season. While supplies last. For ages 4 years and older. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

MERRY MARKETPLACE IN BRRRLIN

Berlin Maryland Welcome Center Parking Lot, 14 S. Main St., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Featuring Santa House, artisans, food cultivators, grab n go holiday crafts, hot chocolate, hot cider, mead, live music, free horse drawn carriage rides and Santa letter mailbox. info@berlinmd.gov, 410-641-2770

FREE DRIVE-IN MOVIE & LASER SHOW

Newtown Park, 2001 Groton Road, Pocomoke City, 7 p.m. Featuring "Elf." Vehicle parking begins at 6 p.m. Laser show to follow movie. Tyler Keiser, 410-632-2144, Ext. 2505, tkeiser@marylandscoast.org, www.playmarylandscoast.org

Sun., Dec. 19

MERRY MARKETPLACE IN BRRRLIN

Berlin Maryland Welcome Center Parking Lot, 14 S. Main St., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Featuring Santa House, artisans, food cultivators, grab n go holiday crafts, hot chocolate, hot cider, mead, live music, free horse drawn carriage rides and Santa letter mailbox. info@berlinmd.gov, 410-641-2770

Mon., Dec. 20

GREAT BOOKS DISCUSSION

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2:30 p.m. The Great Books Discussion group meets twice per month to discuss both classic and modern reading selections recommended by the Great Books Foundation. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

SUPER POWERED STEM: MAKE & TAKE HOME!

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Learn how to make snow slime. All materials will be provided. For children 8 years and older. Register: www.worcesterlibrary.org under "Events." 410-632-2600

T.O.P.S. OF BERLIN - GROUP #169

Atlantic General Hospital, Conference Room 1, 9733 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 5-6:30 p.m. Take Off Pounds Sensibly is a weekly support and educational group promoting weight loss and living a health lifestyle. Rose Campion, 410-641-0157

DELMARVA WOMEN'S A CAPELLA CHORUS

Mondays - Ocean Pines Community Center, 239 Ocean Parkway, 7:00-9:00 p.m. All ladies that love to sing invited. Contact Mary, 410-629-9383 or Carol Ludwig, 302-242-7062.

Tues., Dec. 21

STORY TIME 'TEENY TINY THINGS'

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and fingerplays. Take-home activity included. For ages 2-5 years. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

CRAFT TIME 'MULTICULTURAL HOLIDAY CRAFTS'

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 10:30 a.m.-noon. Join the group in making several multicultural holiday and winter-themed crafts. All children are welcome. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

WIDOW AND WIDOWERS CLUB

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 1 p.m. Meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month. All are welcome. Refreshments and games to follow meeting. John, 410-208-1398

DELMARVA DANCING

Tuesdays - Selbyville Elks Lodge 2173, 13324 Worcester Highway, Bishopville, 5:30-9 p.m. Dance to the sounds of the '50s and '60s. A \$5 donation to benefit Veterans. Participants show proof of vaccination or wear a mask. delmarvahand-dance@gmail.com, 410-208-1151

Wed., Dec. 22

KIWANIS FOOD DRIVE

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 9:30 a.m.-noon. The Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines - Ocean City is collecting non-perishable foods, which will be delivered to Diakonia.

CRAFT TIME 'SNOWMAN SENSORY BAG'

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Join the group to make a snowman sensory bag and have fun using your little fingers. For ages 2-5 years. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

SKATE WITH SANTA

Sturgis Park, River Street, Snow Hill, 6-8 p.m. Free event featuring the opportunity to ice skate, decorate ornaments, hop on a train ride, enjoy festive music, sip hot chocolate and get a picture with Santa. Open to all ages. 410-632-2144, x2505

ONGOING EVENTS

WINTER TRAIN GARDEN

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, through Jan. 3, 2022. Visitors of all ages can interact with buttons to activate accessories or sounds. Kids can take part in a scavenger hunt to win prizes. Open during the library's regular hours. 410-524-1818

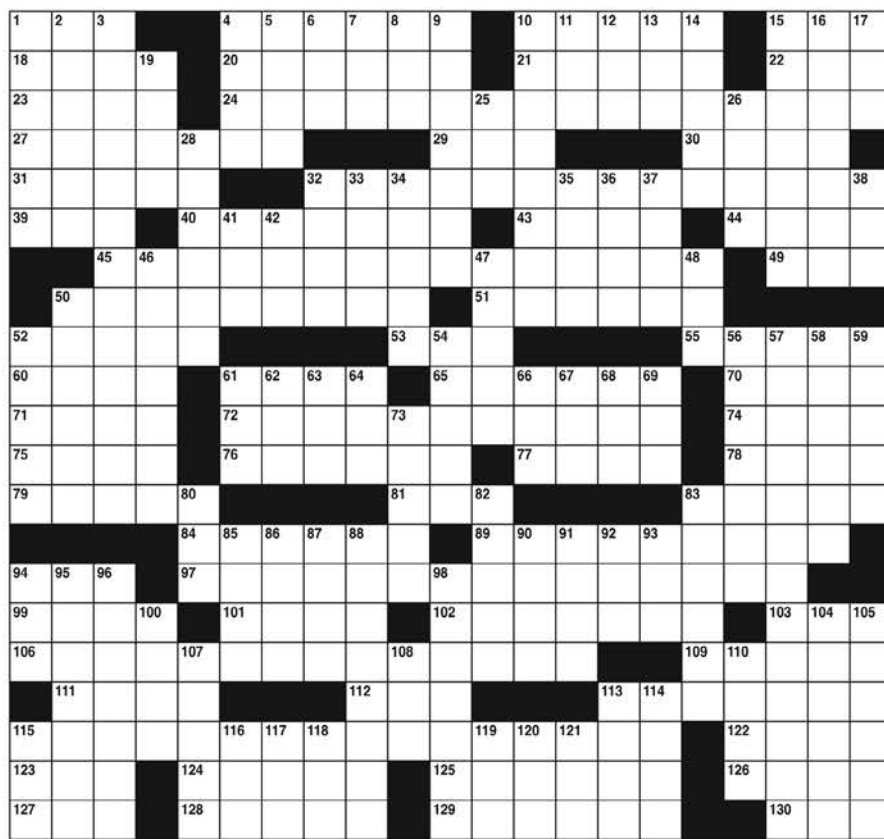
Puzzles

COME AGAIN?

BY CHASE DITTRICH AND JEFF CHEN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Chase Dittrich, formerly of Los Angeles, is a senior program manager for Amazon in Seattle. Jeff Chen, also of Seattle, is a writer and professional crossword constructor. Chase created his first puzzles by hand for fellow Marines while deployed in Afghanistan in 2012. He took up constructing seriously more recently. Chase came up with the idea for this puzzle and then workshopped it with Jeff. - W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 "Bull" ainer
 - 4 Out
 - 10 Win for a 10-Down
 - 15 Yukon automaker
 - 18 Set down
 - 20 With 116-Down, artificial intelligence system that mimics the human brain
 - 21 Who is "too small to make a difference," per a Greta Thunberg book title
 - 22 Propel, as a shell
 - 23 "... and to ___ good night!"
 - 24 ... FLOOR FLOOR FLOOR ...
 - 27 It's got some miles on it
 - 29 Home to the Burj Khalifa, for short
 - 30 Singular
 - 31 Stark who was crowned Queen of the North on "Game of Thrones"
 - 32 ... GRIZZLY GRIZZLY GRIZZLY ...
 - 39 First responder, for short
 - 40 Percussion instrument of African origin
 - 43 What some kings and queens dress in
 - 44 Maker of the classic video game Frogger
 - 45 ... PROPOSAL PROPOSAL PROPOSAL ...
 - 49 Kind of milk
- DOWN**
- 50 Rapper with more than 20 Grammys
 - 51 Reps
 - 52 Click ___ (artificial increasers of website hits)
 - 53 Goddess of the dawn
 - 55 Pet lovers' org.
 - 60 James who sang "I Sing the Blues"
 - 61 Grandma, affectionately
 - 65 Roy Lichtenstein's genre
 - 70 Brit's "How shocking!"
 - 71 What many lifeguards have
 - 72 ... COMMERCIAL COMMERCIAL COMMERCIAL ...
 - 74 Steve with eight N.B.A. championship rings
 - 75 Chemical suffixes
 - 76 Like the color of honey
 - 77 "Give me a break, would you?!"
 - 78 Philosopher who wrote "A Treatise of Human Nature"
 - 79 Lead-in to ask or suggest
 - 81 Get hitched
 - 83 They're explained by Newton's law of universal gravitation
 - 84 N.F.L. Hall-of-Famer Shannon
 - 89 Inconveniences
 - 94 Company with a Page Program
 - 97 ... AMBITION AMBITION AMBITION ...
 - 99 Word-of-mouth
 - 101 Actor Spall of "Prometheus"
 - 102 Literally, "I bow to you"
 - 103 Op. ___ (footnote abbr.)
 - 106 ... STAIRS STAIRS STAIRS ...
 - 109 ___ di Pietro, artist better known as Fra Angelico
 - 111 Ta-ta
 - 112 Opposite of down: Abbr.
 - 113 "Let's Stay Together" singer, 1971
 - 115 ... CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION ...
 - 122 Slight problem
 - 123 Pablo Neruda work
 - 124 "Please, I can handle this"
 - 125 Many an informant employed by Sherlock Holmes
 - 126 Org. involved in the Scopes Monkey Trial
 - 127 R.S.V.P. option
 - 128 Way up or way down
 - 129 Pocketful in ring-around-the-rosy
 - 130 Syracuse-to-Albany dir.
 - 11 Hawaiian taro dish
 - 12 Family member inaply found in "ladies only"
 - 13 High school subj.
 - 14 Vehicle company with a market value over \$1 trillion
 - 15 Adventurous kids in a 1985 film
 - 16 Napoleon's famed war horse
 - 17 Shout
 - 19 Some diaper changers
 - 25 Rapper dissed by Jay-Z in "Takeover"
 - 26 Young 'uns
 - 28 Popular Toyotas
 - 32 How a zombie might spread the infection
 - 33 Ostrich relatives
 - 34 Peter out
 - 35 "Symphony in Black" artist
 - 36 Something necessary for gain, they say
 - 37 The "grand slam" of showbiz awards, in brief
 - 38 Like some apparel, in song
 - 41 Mimic
 - 42 Opposite of FF
 - 46 Together
 - 47 Kind of jar
 - 48 Org. that hires cryptanalysts
 - 50 Samurai's sword
 - 52 Awful-smelling
 - 54 Give one's take
 - 56 Religion that emphasizes seva, or "selfless service"
 - 57 Astrology or palmistry
 - 58 Sandiego not usually found in San Diego
 - 59 Lew ___, portrayer of Dr. Kildare
 - 80 Destination for Birthright trips: Abbr.
 - 82 Someone's in the kitchen with her, in song
 - 83 Savory Chinese snack
 - 85 Grinder
 - 86 Put ___ on (limit)
 - 87 Dennis the Menace's appropriately named dog
 - 88 Bishops, e.g.
 - 90 Execs: Abbr.
 - 91 Smartphone predecessors, for short
 - 92 Choice words
 - 93 Card-matching game
 - 94 Prefix with binary
 - 95 Male etiquette, as described by Barney Stinson on "How I Met Your Mother"
 - 96 Eyeteeth
 - 98 Clique
 - 100 Exam with a 35-minute timed essay, in brief
 - 104 What 10s represent
 - 105 Notable chameleon feature
 - 107 Grinds away
 - 108 Not friendly
 - 110 ___ Minor
 - 113 Singer India. ___
 - 114 Part of the eye
 - 115 Demure
 - 116 See 20-Across
 - 117 Pac-12 athlete
 - 118 Rapsallion
 - 119 ___-yo
 - 120 They're found below the "To" field
 - 121 Tuna, on a sushi menu



- 61 Badger
- 62 Brouhaha
- 63 When doubled, boring result in the Premier League
- 64 Word commonly following the Oxford comma
- 66 Messy sort
- 67 What seven did to nine, in a joke
- 68 Lament
- 69 Celebrity gossip site
- 73 Like New Jerseyans vis-à-vis New Yorkers
- 80 Destination for Birthright trips: Abbr.
- 82 Someone's in the kitchen with her, in song
- 83 Savory Chinese snack
- 85 Grinder
- 86 Put ___ on (limit)
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- 118 Rapsallion
- 119 ___-yo
- 120 They're found below the "To" field
- 121 Tuna, on a sushi menu

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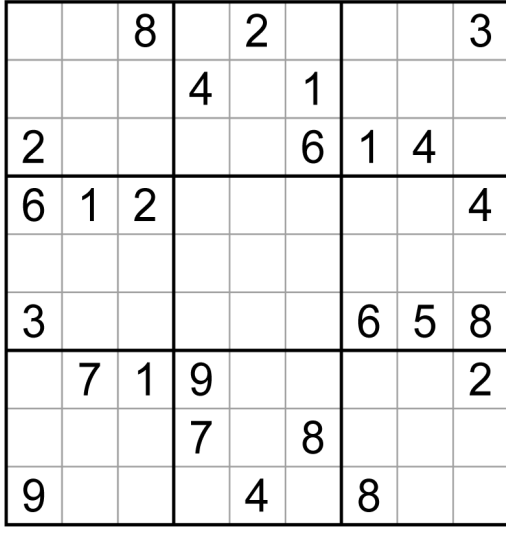
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HARD - 64

Fill in the blank spaces in the grid so that every vertical column, every horizontal row and every 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9, without repeating any. There is really only one solution to each puzzle.



Answers to last week's puzzles

1	6	4	9	2	3	8	7	5
7	8	2	5	4	6	1	3	9
5	9	3	1	7	8	2	6	4
9	3	8	7	6	1	5	4	2
4	2	1	3	8	5	7	9	6
6	5	7	4	9	2	3	8	1
8	7	9	2	5	4	6	1	3
2	1	6	8	3	9	4	5	7
3	4	5	6	1	7	9	2	8



CLASSIFIED Marketplace

Call **410-723-6397**
by Monday 5 p.m.



Classifieds appear in **Ocean City Today & Bayside Gazette** each week and online at oceancitytoday.com & baysideoc.com

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED



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WEIGHT ROOM ATTENDANTS Sea Colony, Bethany Beach (20 minutes from OC) Experience not necessary. **Info and apply:** vacasa.com/careers or Jen Neal: jennifer.neal@vacasa.com

CASHIER WANTED. Delaware Tobacco Outlet, 100 Coastal Hwy., Suite 3, Fenwick Island, DE 19944 & Dot Cigarette, Bethany, DE, 302-537-2202. **Apply in person both locations.**

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Rooms Division Manager

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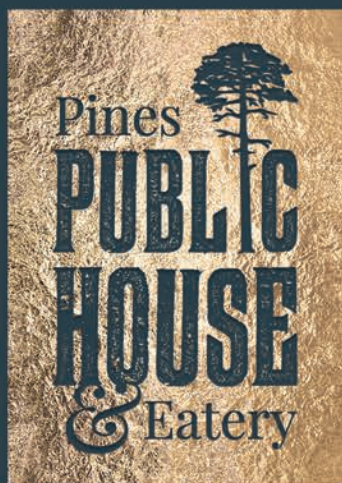
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the menu

Lobster Bisque | 11
chef's family recipe

Hopping John | 8
a New Year's classic in soup form

Maple Bourbon Pecan Salad | 9
mixed greens • dried cranberries • red onion • goat cheese • house candied pecans • sliced apples • maple bourbon bacon shallot vinaigrette

Beet & Blue | 9
sliced roasted beets • shaved fennel • agave vinaigrette • lemon zest • crumbled buttermilk blue cheese • smoked almond dust

Pines Caesar Salad | 8
chopped romaine • sliced brussels sprouts • julienned kale • caesar dressing • grated & sliced parmesan • crostini

starters

Cheese Board | 16
chef's cheeses of the day • accoutrements • crostini

Crab Cake Trio | 16
house recipe • fried • sriracha aioli • tartar sauce • cocktail sauce

Lobster Newburgh | 18
mushroom duxelles • butter poached cold water lobster • newburgh sauce • caramelized gruyere

Smoked Fish & Oyster Dip | 15
house smoked • white fish • red chili smoked oysters • gruyere • toasted baguette

Beef Carpaccio | 16
sliced dry aged filet mignon • shaved horseradish • whole grain mustard aioli • caper berries • cornichons • egg yolk • pickled red onion

entrees

Wild Caught Grouper | 35
apricot chutney • beurre blanc • wild rice • crispy shallots • baby rainbow carrots

Crab Cakes | 39
sweet potato & scrapple hash • sautéed baby spinach • moutarde champagne sauce

Surf & Turf | 37
pan seared diver scallops • coffee braised beef short rib • pesto risotto • sliced roasted beets

Prime New York Strip | 39
smashed baked potato • fried onions • grilled asparagus • garlic rosemary butter • new york king steak

Chateaubriand | 55
12oz dry aged filet mignon • black pepper & cocoa rubbed • bourbon creamed spinach • grilled sweet potato

Rack of Lamb | 38
whole grain & panko crusted • black cherry rosemary demi • jus • whipped potatoes • haricot verts

Veal Strip Steak | 37
whipped russet potatoes • grilled asparagus • red zinfandel reduction

Chipotle Duck à L'orange | 36
chili smoked à l'orange sauce • breast • confit of leg & thigh • whipped sweet potatoes • sautéed baby spinach

Roasted Airline Chicken | 31
twin breasts • heirloom winter vegetables • moroccan cous cous • garlic rosemary pan sauce

Vegan Foraged Mushroom Pasta | 24
black truffle & brown butter roasted • locally sourced morel • chanterelles • lobster cremini & shiitake mushrooms • pearl onions • peas • carrots • herbed white wine sauce • shaved

dessert

Strawberry Nutella Cheesecake | 9
classic cheesecake layered with nutella & strawberries

Chocolate Molten Lava Cake | 9
flourless • belgian chocolate • eggs • classic preparation

Berry Pound Cake Trifle | 8
layers of vanilla cream & macerated berries

Bananas Foster | 8
french vanilla ice cream • puff pastry • hot banana rum sauce