

# Barriers give Beach Avenue look of construction zone

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Barriers were put in place to allow outdoor seating on the sidewalk for dining establishments along a two-block stretch of Beach Avenue and a pedestrian walkway, but according to Mayor Chuck Lear, once barriers were in place, some stores along the street noticed a decline in sales.

“What they are indicating is people think it is a construction area, they are not coming over there and we need some kind of indication that they are open,” he said.

Lear suggested signs stating the businesses are open. He said some businesses attempted to place a sign on the concrete barriers, but the city is prohibiting

such action.

Councilwoman Stacy Sheehan suggested removing some of the barriers past Southend Surf Shop where outside seating is not present.

Councilman Shaine Meier said he had received complaints about orange plastic fencing along the street. He said he believed part of the construction zone look comes from the fencing.

Some of the restaurants have used dune fencing, Councilman Zack Mullock said.

Meier said some restaurants placed a sign on the barriers. City Manager Jerry Inderwies said the signs become loose since there is no secure way to attach them.

“It became a safety issue and we had to remove them because bicyclists

are squeezed to the right and a bicycle pedal or foot could have lodged in that and caused an accident,” he said. “That’s why they were removed.”

Lear said the primary goal of the barriers is to provide a walkway because of the narrow sidewalk in a busy area. He said if the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the restaurants using the Beach Avenue sidewalk would lose all or most of their seating when the barriers are gone.

Signs indicating a business is open may be able to be mounted on buildings or in shop windows, Lear suggested. Deputy Mayor Patricia Hendricks suggested using flags with the word “open” such as those that have been used on the Washington Street Mall in winter.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Concrete barriers intended to protect people dining on sidewalks in Cape May give the area the impression that it’s a construction zone, business owners say.

She suggested a long banner attached to the barrier with the logos or name of the particular stores in that

block. Inderwies said there was no way to attach signs to the barrier. He suggested signs at the entrance to the

walkway indicating businesses are open or lighting up businesses at night.

City solicitor Frank Corrado said while the city has sign ordinances, he did not see a problem with allowing some of the businesses to post additional signs at this time. He asked if the pedestrian walkway was still necessary and if some portions could be removed.

He also suggested replacing plastic fencing with something more aesthetically attractive.

Inderwies said the plastic fencing allows access for the fire department and something more permanent would restrict access.

The plastic fence also prevents people from running across the street and jumping over barriers, Inderwies said.

# Escape the Cape Triathlon changes date, race format

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

NORTH CAPE MAY — The Escape the Cape Triathlon was postponed on its original date due to the COVID-19 pandemic but has been tentatively scheduled for Aug. 29-30 with a different format.

The biking and running portions will become virtual but the 12-foot leap from the deck of a Cape May-Lewes Ferry boat will remain and the swim will remain.

Steve Del Monte, founder and president of DelMonte sports, said the state is allowing groups as large as 500 people. The ferry runs daily from New Jersey to Delaware with a full car deck plus 800 passengers at any one time and they effectively social

distance on that ship, he said.

Del Monte said he was proposing putting 400 people on the ship. He said 2,000 people signed up for the jump from the deck of the ferry.

“We want to produce this event as a swim-only event,” he said. “We believe the best thing to do is to eliminate the run and the bike portions as a live event and turn the Escape the Cape Triathlon into the Escape the Cape Hybrid Triathlon.”

He said a participant would do a portion of the race at the site and the other two would be done virtually, away from the race site. Del Monte said he wanted to get public input on the event changes.

Those who signed up for the event received an email over the past weekend ask-

ing if they were interested in participating in the swim portion.

“If only 300 people are interested, we’re only going to need one boat,” he said. “If 600 people are interested, that would take us over the limit of 500; that means we need two boats.”

If 1,100 or 1,200 people are

interested in the swim event, a third ship would be available Saturday Aug. 29. A total of 400 to 450 would be placed on the ferry at one time, Del Monte said.

He said all the safety protocols will be in place that the Delaware River and Bay Authority has in effect for ferry passengers with twice

as many people on a full car deck. Athletes only would be permitted on the ferry, no spectators. A mandatory screening would be completed before checking in for the event.

“We’ll have no cars and half the amount of people and three decks to spread out on,” Del Monte said.

Final plans will not be made until participants respond, he said. Social distancing will be in place with everyone on the ferry wearing a mask, Del Monte said. If only 100 people respond positively, the event would not take place, he said.

A final decision on the event is expected to be made Aug. 5.

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