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WINTER STORM KENAN

SURF AND TURF TO RE-OPEN

YOUNG SURVIVORS IN ACTION



PHOTO BY BETH LAYTON BAKER

HEADLINES



PHOTO BY DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



WINTER STORM KENAN KEEPS CREWS BUSY OVER WEEKEND

BY TERRY ROGERS

Winter Storm Kenan blew into the Milford area in the late evening hours of Friday, Jan. 28, dropping as much as 14 inches of snow in some places. Gusty winds throughout the night and into early Saturday afternoon caused drifting snow which led to road hazards in Milford and the surrounding areas.

"At about 8 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 28, a dozen city personnel were mobilized to begin snow removal throughout the city's major streets and communities," Mike Svaby, director of Public Works, said. "They worked through the night and all day the following day, Saturday, Jan. 29, until 4 p.m., cleaning major arteries, parking lots and streets in local residential communities. Having breaks and rests to eat, city equipment operators fought snow drifts, high winds, sub-freezing temperatures and low visibility for a stretch of over 20 hours."

Svaby reported that crews returned on Sunday, Jan. 30, resuming snow removal operations in local communities and parking lots while also adding sidewalk clearing to their job duties.

"When the sun reached its peak around 12 p.m., crews ceased operations for the day," Svaby said. "This gave the wind a chance to die down and the salt that was applied, and lots of it, to do its job." Svaby stated that the final snow removal operations would resume Monday, Jan. 31, and should conclude by the evening.

Winter Storm Kenan brought blizzard conditions to the area, leading many residents to stock up on supplies in preparation for being snowed in over the weekend. Many area stores reported empty shelves, especially bottled water, milk, eggs and bread. In addition, because gusty winds were predicted, many purchased items that would be necessary should they lose electric power. Very few electrical outages were reported during the storm, however.

Because winter is far from over in the area, there are some tips that Svaby offered should another winter storm take aim at the area. Electric outages can be reported by visiting <http://cityofmilford.com/535/MyMilford> on a smartphone. There, residents can also see if someone else has reported the outage in that area. If so, residents can subscribe to updates on that case. If not, enter the appropriate information and submit the outage. Updates on the progress of the return to power will be sent. Residents without a smartphone can report outages to the Milford Police Department at 302-422-8081. In the case of an emergency, please call 911.

"Snow routes in Milford are as follows: NE and NW Front Streets (SR 14), SE Front St. (SR 36), Lakeview Ave. (SR 36) and N. and S. Walnut Streets," Svaby said. "No parking is permitted after one hour of snowfall on these roads and cars are subject to being towed at the owner's

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SNOW from page 3

expense. Please consider off street parking even if you don't live on a snow route so plows can quickly clear streets."

When there is inclement weather, it is likely all recreation programs will be cancelled. In addition, the Riverwalk and all bridges are closed to pedestrians until it is safe. All recreation programs scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 29, are cancelled.

"One of the most important things to remember is that property owners are responsible for ensuring the sidewalk adjacent to their property is maintained in safe condition and free of hazards to either pedestrian or vehicular traffic," Svaby said. "Please ensure that your sidewalks are cleared of snow as soon after snowfall stops or as soon as possible. When high winds are predicted, please secure outside items that can be blown away. Snow and ice may also delay yard waste and bulk pickup so be sure to check the city website for any changes to the schedule."



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HEADLINES



BY TERRY ROGERS

On Monday, Jan. 24, City Clerk Terri Hudson introduced an ordinance that would change the process for voter registration in the city of Milford. The new ordinance would allow Milford residents who are registered to vote in state and federal elections to vote in city elections. This would eliminate the need for residents to register separately with the city.

"We have been trying to figure this out for many years," Hudson said. "We have investigated several options that would provide an easier way for our residents to electronically register to vote in Milford and have explored various programs through private vendors, software companies and many conversations with Sussex County Department of Elections for a very long time. As a matter of fact, many of the employees we initially worked with at the Department of Elections have retired or

VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS IN CITY OF MILFORD TO CHANGE

taken other positions. We worked with a vendor in 2019 who had created an online voter registration. But, because we allow qualified non-residents to vote, there was a holdup trying to determine the best way to incorporate those voters."

Over the past few years, COVID has delayed the ability of the city to change the process for voter registration, Hudson explained. The 2020 election had to be cancelled three times and the city had to manually prepare 2,400 absentee ballots. She stated that her office was focused on making the change once that election cycle was over, but that the pandemic continued, and new problems were created. In addition, her office was busy with the Police Borrowing Referendum, a vote that was also postponed, and a councilmember resigned over the winter requiring a special election.

"Just prior to the end of this year, I spoke to City Engineer James Puddicombe about the voter registration process," Hudson said. "He seemed very encouraged that with the help of his GIS Analyst, what we had anticipated as a burdensome project was simpler and more doable. With his fresh perspective and the assistance available through the Sussex County Department of Elections under Director Bo McDowell, the time was right to move forward."

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VOTE from page 5

Hudson stated that the way the system exists currently, the city can print and distribute voter lists that are separated into four wards at any time. When a new voter registers, they would add them and issue the updated list. With the state registration, Hudson's office would receive a list of all registered voters in the 19963 zip code which will then require her staff to separate residents and eligible voters from non-residents and non-eligible voters. Once that is completed, the list would be divided into the four wards.

"Though that sounds simple, we have streets in Milford that depending on what side or end of the street someone lives on could put them in two, sometimes three, different wards," Hudson said. "But I am much more confident with the input I will receive from the city engineer. We also still need to register qualified non-residents which means we will still need to register voters at City Hall." Hudson explained that a previous city manager and mayor had hoped to gradually do away with non-resident voting, but state law prohibited removing any voting and candidate rights of non-residents.

The new voting process has advantages as residents will no longer be required to register separately at City Hall although, since 2020, Hudson stated that phone registration was permitted and there had been no complaints since that process was added. She also explained that the separate registration process was not a problem until Customer Service staff were separated from City Hall staff as when new residents came to sign up for utilities, they were provided voter registration information. When the two departments were separated,

voter registration with the city became more inconvenient.

"Our city engineer and our GIS Analyst will be our go-to staff for these services," Hudson said. "They will use mapping and data systems to differentiate wards based on locations and addresses. We will continue to use property records and utility records as well. I don't want to say it should become easier after the first year, but the Department of Elections has offered to add ward numbers to their list of voters once we provide them with that information. There will be no change to the process for qualified nonresident property owners. My office will continue to oversee those rolls"

Several council members expressed their support of the new process for voter registration.

"I am very happy to see that the voter registration process is now combined with the state making it much easier for the residents of Milford to vote in the municipal election," Councilman Todd Culotta said. "I'm quite surprised that it has taken this long to make this change. It should make it easier and therefore, allow for much more voter participation. I hope in the future we can work with the state and have our elections coincide with the county, state and national elections as well."

Councilman Jason James, who has been outspoken about his desire to change the voter registration process, agreed with Councilman Culotta.

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CULTURE



Photo BY TERRY ROGERS

TINY HOMES OFFERED TO MILFORD FOR HOMELESS



BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent City Council Workshop, Sylvia Carson, Director of Positive Points as well as Tim Lamberto, vice president of Property Management and Joe Hill, maintenance specialist for Arbor Management, presented council members with details on a tiny home project that was underway in New Castle County. Positive Points is offering to donate the small homes to the city in order to combat a growing homeless problem.

"We serve 17 family properties and children from the ages of four to 19," Carson said after presenting a short video of the services offered by Positive Points. "We also work with senior properties. "We are planning on getting children involved in the construction of these homes. We will bus them, something we have to work out because of COVID, to the job site and they will do some of the craft activities for the homes." According to

information provided to council, some children will assist with garden boxes, mailboxes, welcome mats and other small projects while others will be provided with details on the construction process.

According to Lamberto, the homes will be built in New Castle County on trailers. Hill explained that the homes would be framed traditionally and that New Castle County code enforcement was helping them throughout the process to be sure that the homes were built using the most up-to-date codes.

"The biggest part of this for us is the educational part for children," Hill said. "That's basically what this whole project is about, to allow us to introduce the opportunity for kids to go into building trades. Within that part of the program, we are building mockups for electrical, plumbing, roofing so we can show children the compo-

See HOME on page 9



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nents of the tiny house itself. We can talk them through the process of how it's done, why it's done this way. New Castle County is going to come in and talk about building codes, why they are part of the whole process. When we are done, we are hoping to bring these to the town of Milford so the kids can see us giving stuff back and helping somebody who doesn't have a place to stay or a roof over their head. I will also add that these tiny houses are turnkey. They will be completely furnished. They will have dishes, pots, pans, bathroom, everything but food. They will be turnkey so someone can walk right in with a suitcase and make themselves at home."

Councilman Jason James pointed out that although he felt the tiny home concept was great, there was currently not a place in the code for them to be placed within town limits. Hill pointed out that he was aware this was an issue as the homes were on a trailer. He explained that although the wheels can be removed and a skirting put around the bottom of the tiny home to make it look more permanent, they would need to remain on the trailer. The value of each tiny home is about \$50,000 and each is roughly 285 square feet. Each home would be ADA compliant with grab bars and other handicapped accessible features for those who are mobility impaired. Mayor Archie Campbell asked if the homes were meant solely for the homeless.

"You know, there are people that are not homeless who need housing," Carson said. "So, once you receive these, that would be your determination of how to use the tiny homes." Hill pointed out that in other areas tiny

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homes were used to address veterans in transition or to provide housing for young teachers.

Carson explained that there was a consideration to use the homes for battered women. "The only thing with that is that they felt they would draw attention," Carson said. "That is something you don't want for battered women's housing. You don't want to draw attention to where they are and these will stick out like a sore thumb."

Councilwoman Katrina Wilson applauded the concept, stating that Milford Housing Authority often had people living in transitional locations for six months to two years.

"There's so many levels of homelessness," Councilwoman Wilson said. "We could make a list of the different levels that we have. And the other comment I want to make is that the city of Milford does have a few homes that have been brought in on wheels and those homes that I know of still exist today. They had a foundation built and a home set down on them. So, I can remember, probably 20 years ago was the last one but I do remember that happening. So, I'm not sure how to tweak the code in order for that to happen, but if they were to come, in my opinion, I would like to see them on a foundation and not just on wheels because that just opens so many other doors and I would feel more comfortable if they were permanent."

Councilman Andy Fulton explained that the homes were built on trailers which were integral to the structure of the tiny home. He stated that without the trailer, the home may not have enough support to stand. However, he pointed out that the wheels could be removed, and

an apron foundation placed around it, giving it a more permanent appearance.

"That's a good point," Councilman Todd Culotta said. "I think there's a couple things to consider here. You know, it's good in theory to provide homeless and transitional housing because of community thought. But, there are side effects with some of the issues that come along with that. That's something we'll have to have a discussion with council and city leadership to figure out how to best accommodate that."

Councilman Mike Boyle agreed with Councilman Culotta. "We are at the very beginning stages of discussing smaller housing units in Milford," Councilman Boyle said. "And it may be a little bit premature. I'm going to allow that the concept is great. We have a little bit of time and as Councilman Culotta said, this is something that is in the very beginning stages and trying to incorporate into the ordinance may take several months to get to that."

Councilwoman Wilson understood what Councilmen Boyle and Culotta were saying but felt that it was time to begin addressing the homeless situation in the city.

"I just want to say that this homelessness is never going away, and the city of Milford has really not stepped out to help the homelessness in a grand way like so many of our other cities around us that are even smaller," Councilwoman Wilson said. "We don't even have a homeless shelter and we have lots of homeless folks taking refuge in so many different places. I just want to say publicly that I hope we wholeheartedly talk about

See HOME on page 11

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this and talk about all the possibilities. But keep in mind, the realness of this situation is providing shelter for these less fortunate folks."

Although in total agreement with Councilwoman Wilson, Councilman Boyle explained that he simply did not want to bring tiny houses into the town in a haphazard manner.

"We really need to give it a lot of thought because, as we've discussed in previous meetings, it is almost a situation that is critical and needs to be addressed. We don't have the infrastructure to support this kind of stuff. We're going to look at some other things tonight including the foundation for the auxiliary living units which probably fall into that. But we need serious consideration, and we just can't jump right in tonight. You need to really give it some serious thought, methodically plan this thing out and not react to somebody else. We know we have full-time homeless encampments, and we do, as a city, have an obligation to relieve that situation."

City Planner Rob Pierce explained that there were two aspects that needed to be addressed when it came to tiny homes. The first was the building code which is based on the International Code Council (ICC) which has an entire appendix dedicated to tiny houses. He stated that changing the building code would be relatively easy.

"The tough part is the zoning ordinance," Pierce said. "A tiny house would be considered a mobile home because it has a registration and it's on an axle so that it is easily transported. If these tiny homes are constructed

to the building and placed on a permanent concrete or block foundation, anchored down properly, it would be treated as an accessory dwelling unit or single-family dwelling of some sort. And then you have to figure out where you want to put them. Do you put them in an apartment complex? Do you put them on city property? Do you put them on lots with other homes? Those are all things to take into consideration from a zoning standpoint."

Pierce also explained that this may be a project that could be taken over by Milford Housing Development Corporation who could determine if it is worthwhile to have the discussion and who could oversee who would inhabit the units.

"We do thank you for hearing our pitch," Lamberto said. "We understand there are a lot of dynamics, and we are appreciative of your time. Just so you know, these will be finished in August. I know it takes zoning, but these going to be weatherproofed and ready to go."

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COUNCIL APPROVES RECREATIONAL PROJECTS FOR DOWNTOWN

BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent meeting, Milford City Council approved a request from Brad Dennehy, director of Parks and Recreation, to move forward with the bidding process for several downtown recreational projects. The projects include pickleball courts, a pavilion and a playground in the area of the Milford Riverwalk as well as in Memorial Park.

"We are in the process of developing a concept plan for Memorial Park," Dennehy said. "I want to caveat that and say this is a concept plan. So, a lot of the items in this have been identified as part of our Capital Improvement Plan as well as through public input. Nothing is set in stone at this stage. However, we have got funding. So, what we have funding for at the state level and with approved funds from the council is a playground and pickleball courts, and potentially a future picnic pavilion." A possible restroom is also planned for Memorial Park.

As for Bicentennial Park and the Riverwalk, Dennehy stated that plans were underway for a future bandstand or stage. The ideas for the recreational projects came from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board as well as public input sessions. The Memorial Park playground would be placed in the grass area on the south side of the bridge and the pickleball courts would be installed behind the basketball courts.

"In terms of other stuff, we will be coming back and seeking more input from the public and council," Dennehy said. "DMI has put in for funding for a restroom, but we don't know at this stage if that'll be funded or not. I think the idea is we don't just

want to put a playground downtown. We don't just want to put a pickleball court in Memorial Park. We want a cohesive plan to know where we're trying to go. The idea is we have a pavilion people can come down and have a nice picnic on Sunday. The kids can play on the basketball court, they can be on the playground, they can play pickleball."

Parks and Recreation has received funding toward several of the projects, including a \$200,000 grant for the playground and \$175,000 from DNREC to be used for both the pickleball courts and playground. City Council has also earmarked funds for both projects. Dennehy explained that the playground would be in the style of a ship as an acknowledgement to the city's rich shipbuilding history. It will have slides, swing sets and climbing structures. Dennehy also stated that there seemed to be a definite need for pickleball courts based on public input.

"I really like the concept, the idea of play," Councilman Todd Culotta said. "I'm really excited about that with a two-year-old. About the pickleball courts, which I think are wonderful as it's a very popular sport and people are looking for it everywhere, is there any way we can incorporate tennis courts in there for the traditionalists?"

Dennehy explained that several pickleball players and representatives from a Sussex County pickleball association spoke to the advisory board about the game. They indicated that the courts should only be lined for pickleball as different lining could make the game confusing. Councilman Culotta stated that he wasn't asking to have a dual-purpose court but wondered if tennis courts could be an additional recreational project in the park.

"We don't have tennis courts in Milford," Councilman Culotta said. "The only place we have them is at the high school and you can't use them while school is in session." Dennehy offered to look into the possibility as there had been requests for tennis courts. He also pointed out that he had a son on the tennis team who would be willing to play at any time.

Mayor Archie Campbell stated that people often asked him about a skateboard park, mentioning that there was one in Milford some years ago.

"We did have one on that Washington Street site years ago," Dennehy said. "It was a ramp system which became problematic for whatever reason, but that was a little before my time at Parks and Rec, so I can't speak to specifics. But the ramp did get dismantled and was not replaced. I've had more probably conversations in the last six

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DOWNTOWN from page 12

months about skateboards, some sort of skateboard park. I am not sure whether downtown is the best place for it. My personal feeling is maybe by the BMX track where we've got additional city owned land."

Councilman Brian Baer questioned the location of the picnic pavilion, mentioning that in a meeting held the week before, Dennehy commented that the pavilion had been moved in the plan.

"We actually just got the latest rendering on Friday, so it was too late to get it into the packet, but you are correct," Dennehy said. "The pavilion to the west of the pickleball courts will be moved to the other side of the basketball court, closer to where the playground is. That immediately jumped out, I think, when Mark and Rob looked at it and, as parents, the first thing we thought was we are having a picnic and want the kids to be in the line of sight where they can jump on the playground. No one wants to be in the picnic pavilion and running up and down the park trying to find their kids."

Councilman Baer also liked the idea of adding a few tennis courts to the park and asked about a potential water feature that had been included in other plans.

"There has been a splash pond proposed at several locations over the last few years," Dennehy said. "I don't think we ever identified exactly where that was going to end up, but again, you know this is very much a concept plan. If that's something council feels is desirable and there is public support for it, it could be something we look into moving forward."

Council approved sending the projects to bid unanimously.





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OUR LOCATIONS



BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford City Council recently approved a request from Brad Dennehy, director of Parks and Recreation, to install a new section of guardrail with a lighted handrail system along the Mispillion River. The section would replace current guardrail behind the Santa House along the Riverwalk.

"This has come before the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and we also had a public input session," Dennehy said. "The existing guardrail is a post and galvanized railing system and basically we narrowed it down to two options. One is basically a vertical type of structure and was the least favorite option. The second was a stainless-steel type of structure with a cabling type of guardrail. It would prevent potentially kids falling into the river or balls falling into the river, those types of things. So, it's a guardrail system but it is more aesthetically pleasing because you can actually look through the cabling and see the river, which is what we

NEW GUARDRAIL TO BE INSTALLED ON RIVERWALK

want to sort of showcase. So, that was the preferred type of guardrail system that the public wanted to see."

Dennehy explained that grant money had been obtained for the new guardrail and that the city had earmarked funds to cover the cost. The project would need to be put out to competitive bid at the state level which would include additional rules and regulations. Councilman Dan Marabello asked where the lights were located in the guardrail.

"The mounting will be in the actual top handrail itself," Dennehy said. "The idea is to be LED lighting, be energy efficient, but it'd be lighting for pedestrians on the Riverwalk. We have lighting in the park, but the reasoning for putting lighting into the handrail was to offer greater visibility at night that isn't going to be intrusive. We don't want to put up search lights, so to speak. Just a nice subtle type of lighting, particularly when people come downtown, in the summertime, to the Santa House, walking between the restaurants. We just really want to take the ambiance to another level with the whole feel of the Riverwalk."

Councilman Todd Culotta stated that he felt the new guardrail would look very good along the river and Dennehy pointed out that the new look could be a big draw for downtown, bringing a sense of the 21st century into downtown. Councilman Mike Boyle asked if the

See GUARDRAIL on page 15

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guardrail would eventually be added the entire length of the Riverwalk.

"I think it's definitely going in the section between Walnut Street and Washington Street," Dennehy said. "I think the next phase would be to move across the street from Walnut Street up towards the Second Street Players is very similar. We have the same type of guardrail system on the south side of the river, so we would like to get that replaced."

Council approved sending the new section of guardrail out for bid unanimously.



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SURF AND TURF TO OPEN WITH NEW MENU

BY TERRY ROGERS

In August 2021, citing staffing difficulties. Steve Akoglu, owner of both Surf and Turf as well as The Palace, announced that the steak and seafood restaurant would be closing temporarily. Akoglu opened the restaurant at the former Bob Evans location, hoping to bring a high-end steak and seafood house to Milford. This week, Akoglu announced that Surf and Turf would be reopening on Tuesday, Feb. 1, for lunch and dinner. In April, they will begin offering breakfast.

"Before we tried to do the better quality, fine dining restaurant," Akoglu said. "Although it kind of worked in the beginning, we began to struggle. Don't get me wrong, the high-end steakhouse has business potential, but at the time we just couldn't get the right help. The help in the kitchen at the time just wasn't making good food and it was not consistent. It just was not at the fine dining level."

Akoglu has hired a new chef from New Jersey and adjusted the menu so that it is more in line with what he offers at the Palace. Prices were lowered as most of the feedback he received was that his prices were too high for the area. He also explained that the closure was designed to give him time to regroup and decide which direction he wanted to go.

"It's not how we wanted to do business," Akoglu said. "I didn't want to get a bad reputation in the town. Because if people come here and have a bad experience, you may not get a second chance to fix it. We just didn't have enough, or the right help and we didn't want to mess it up."

The new menu includes many of the Italian specialties offered at The Palace, such as seafood alfredo, shrimp stir fry, chicken Francais and more. Steaks, served with two sides as well as salad or soup include ribeye, prime

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rib, New York strip, filet and Kansas City dry-aged steak. Prices for the steaks range from \$29 to \$36, significantly lower than when Surf and Turf opened originally. Other entrees range from \$18 to \$28 while sandwiches and burgers range from \$10 to \$14. Sandwiches are served with French fries. There are also a selection of soups and salads available. There is no pizza on the menu, however.

"The bar will continue to offer high-end liquors and wines," Akoglu said. "But we will also have the standard bar options as well. When we open for breakfast in April, we hope to offer Bloody Mary bars, mimosas and other morning cocktails. With the church right behind us, we have had people ask if we would serve breakfast. Someone can stop in, have breakfast and then head to church, so we wanted to add that. We simply want to wait to get lunch and dinner service worked out first."

Staffing is still an issue, according to Akoglu, but seems to be improving since the additional \$600 in unemployment stipends have ended.

"I had to close my Georgetown location to dinner service," Akoglu said. "It opened only for breakfast and lunch. This allowed me to shift that staff to Milford, either at the Palace or at Surf and Turf. The Palace is remaining open as well, we are not combining the two locations. We will be open seven days a week, starting next week just for lunch and dinner then in April we will include breakfast."

Using staff from his other locations will help Surf and Turf remain consistent, Akoglu said. "If I had to hire all new staff here, we would need 14 to 15 people per shift as they learned how we did things," Akoglu said. "With

See SURF on page 19

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staff members, some of which have been with me six or seven years, we can run a shift with just eight as they are familiar with policies, procedures and operations."

COVID-19 is still a factor in the restaurant industry, Akoglu explained. "Business is still really slow," Akoglu said. "At all my locations, we are seeing fewer people coming out to eat and we believe it is related to the new COVID variant. However, I felt that opening Surf and Turf up now was a way to get everything running smoothly before summer which is a much busier time. We hope to have everything established and running smoothly by summer."

Akoglu believes the Milford community will support the new restaurant and believes they will allow him to work out all the bugs.

"It has been very stressful," Akoglu said. "It is heart-breaking sitting here and knowing this is still costing money. Being closed does not give you any benefit. Sometimes, people ask 'why did you close' and they just don't understand how difficult a decision that was. We still had a mortgage, we still had bills, it wasn't like I was just sitting home relaxing."

Surf and Turf as well as Akoglu's other restaurants are hiring for all positions, including bartenders, servers, managers and kitchen. Anyone interested can apply by visiting <https://surfturfhouse.com/apply/> or call 302-249-5260. They can also stop in to fill out an application. Surf and Turf is located at 947 North Dupont Highway. Reservations can be made by calling 302-503-5555 or 302-503-5000.



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M&T BANK BUILDING CONDITIONAL USE APPROVED

BY TERRY ROGERS

Zack King, owner of EasySpeak, Penney Square and the former M&T Bank building, came before Milford City Council on Monday, Jan. 24, to request a conditional use for the bank building. King and his wife, Marissa, recently purchased the property and were requesting the conditional use to temporarily move a church and offices from Penney Square during renovations of that property.

"The proposed conditional use is mainly for temporary usage," King said. "We have a church tenant and some office tenants across the street in Penney Square that we need to temporarily relocate to be able to finish work on Penney Square. What the proposed use for the

bank building long term is a wedding venue, event space, concert hall type of plan. The proposal tonight is for the change in conditional uses mainly to give us the option to put two tenants in that space for a period of about a year, year and a half at the very most."

King pointed out that working in historic buildings often led to challenges that could extend the construction and rehabilitation process. He stated that the entire building will need to come under fire suppression and water lines will need to be run while architectural and engineering plans will also take time.

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GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



PHOTO BY ANN LEBENGOOD

CODE CHANGES APPROVED IN CITY OF MILFORD

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford City Council approved several ordinances designed to update several sections of the city code. This has been a project conducted through the Planning Commission in partnership with the city solicitor.

"The purpose of this process is to implement the goals and recommendations from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan update," Rob Pierce, city planner, said. "It is also to reduce the number of Board of Adjustment applications that are being reviewed and approved, standardize site plan, subdivision and conditional use application review procedures and explore provisions and eliminate contradictory statements."

Pierce continued that the changes would also address erroneous or missing language as well as address items that could cause confusion. Meetings with the Planning Commission began in January 2021 and continued throughout the year, culminating in a workshop before council in October 2021. Most of the changes were administrative, simply correcting and updating language throughout the various ordinances.

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"We had to go back and modify the draft you saw in October to keep mobile home parks an option within R3 and R8 zoning districts," Pierce said. "So, we have proposed to delete that language in the prior rendition you saw. We're basically going to keep the current code language and place that back in the R3 and R8, but we also had to keep some architectural requirements in our business park zone. And we removed a supermajority requirement for zoning amendments that was in the latter section of the ordinance."

The four ordinances, which were approved separately, included a deleting a section of the code dealing with car washes as well as a chapter dealing with satellite dishes. Pierce explained that car washes needed to be dealt with in each zoning district while the language in the satellite dish ordinance violated federal telecommunications requirements. Although there was no public comment regarding the changes, several council members had questions.



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NOTICE OF SOLICITATION OF CANDIDATES

BY TERRY ROGERS

The city of Milford Annual Election will be held Saturday, April 23, 2022, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The term of office for the following seats will expire in May 2024:

- Office of Mayor: two year term beginning May 2, 2022
- Councilperson: two year term beginning May 2, 2022 – First Ward
- Councilperson: two year term beginning May 2, 2022 – Second Ward
- Councilperson: two year term beginning May 2, 2022 – Third Ward
- Councilperson: two year term beginning May 2, 2022 – Fourth Ward

In accordance with the city of Milford Charter, not less than sixty (60) days prior to the Annual Election, all candidates for office shall file a nominating petition, stating their name and the office for which he/she is nominated. Mayor petitions shall be signed by not less than ten (10) registered voters in the city of Milford; Council petitions shall be signed by not less than ten (10) registered voters residing in the ward in which the candidate resides.

Candidate Packets and Nominating Petitions can be obtained Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30

p.m. at the City Clerk's Office at Milford City Hall, 201 South Walnut Street, Milford, Delaware. Special times can also be arranged. Please call in advance to schedule an appointment as the building is currently closed as a Covid-19 precaution.

Qualifications for a person filing for office are as follows:

- (1) Citizen of the United States of America;
- (2) Bonafide resident of the city of Milford;
- (3) Office of Mayor—continuously resided in the city of Milford for two years preceding the day of the election;
- Office of Council—continuously resided in the Ward for which he/she is seeking election for one year preceding the day of the election;
- (4) A qualified voter in the city of Milford;
- (5) At least eighteen (18) years of age as of the date of the election;
- (6) Nominated therefore;
- (7) Criminal background check provided from the State Bureau of Identification and Federal Bureau of Investigation showing entire criminal history record;
- (8) No felony convictions or crimes involving moral turpitude.

The deadline to file for the Office of Mayor and/or City Council is Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

Only residents who are registered voters through the state of Delaware are qualified to vote in this election. A separate registration is still required at Milford City Hall for Non-Resident Property Owners who qualify. This can be accomplished by calling the City Clerk's Office. Those registered non-residents who own property in more than one ward, must declare which ward they wish to vote in by Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022. The deadline for new qualified voters to register to vote in this municipal election is Thursday, March 24, 2022, at 4:30 p.m.

Anyone with questions about the eligibility of a non-resident property owner, or who wishes to be put on a list to obtain an affidavit for an absentee ballot, must call the City Clerk's Office at 302-422-1111 ext. 1300 or 1303.



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EDUCATION





BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford School District this week announced that Mr. Jesse Parsley, principal of Milford High School, had been transferred to the district's Student Learning Team. Mr. Gary Zoll, principal of Milford Central Academy, will serve as Interim Secondary Schools Principal for the second semester, assuming the principal responsibilities for both Milford High School and Milford Central Academy.

"This is a temporary structural change for the administrative leadership of our secondary schools," Dr. Kevin Dickerson, superintendent, said. "Our current MHS and MCA assistant principals and Supervisor of Specialized Secondary Programs will continue in their present roles.

MCA AND MHS UNDERGO TEMPORARY STAFF CHANGES

Parsley became assistant principal at Milford High School in 2016, taking the role of principal a few years later. A long-time teacher with Milford, Parsley chose to move into administration in order to have a bigger impact on families in the community.

"As a classroom teacher, we have a direct impact on the students and teachers that we see daily," Parsley said. "As an administrator, our four walls are bigger, and the impact is larger. There are so many things we can do to ensure our high school graduates are college and career ready."

Zoll came to Milford School District in 2016, coming to Delaware after earning his bachelor's degree. A social studies and math teacher at the middle school level, Zoll moved into the administrative side of education after watching a lot of administrators come and go over 15 years.

"I was also on leadership teams for 10 years, a part of a lot of district committees and head of our union," Zoll said. "My two main goals at MCA are to encourage kids to be the best they can be every day and to for them to be community citizens. Too often, we get dragged down by the fact that we are okay with good. In other words, if we are good at something, we don't work to become the best. Every day, I want all of us to strive and work towards the best. We also cannot be successful without the town and surrounding areas of Milford, and Milford cannot be successful without our success. Let's strive to give back to the community in many ways, but also ask

for community support in our schools to change and become the best in Delaware and beyond."

Milford School District commended Parsley for his dedication.

"We appreciate Mr. Parsley's work and leadership in our secondary schools as an administrator during the past six school years," Dr. Dickerson said.



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MILFORD APPROVES ADA TRANSITION PLAN

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford City Council approved an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan at their regular meeting held Jan. 24, 2022. The city is required to have a transition plan to address any deficiencies that have been identified in the city with a plan for correcting those deficiencies.

"Last year, we contracted with a firm that came through the city and did an extensive survey of all our facilities and gave us a list of items that need to be corrected," City Manager Mark Whitfield said. "Mike Svaby has been working diligently over a significant period of time putting together the transition plan that would be compliant again within the statute."

According to Svaby, director of Public Works, the city conducted self-assessment and formulated a transition plan in order to move forward in the budget process in

order to bring the city compliant with the ADA. This self-assessment resulted in an ADA compliant document that the city intends to publish.

"It is a collaborative effort among city governments as well as public and advocate representatives," Svaby said. "The city of Milford pledges to provide full accessibility to all areas of public access and continues to dedicate upholding the intent and spirit of the ADA Act and the 1990 amendment in Section 504 of the Rehab Act of 1973."

Svaby stated that the document would not solely address physical needs of citizens, but also address how city representatives must deal with disabilities.

"I'm not only speaking of construction and maintenance of all Milford facilities, but I can say that as representatives, city government, all programs, services and activities supported by the city of Milford specifically

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are in place such that no qualified individual with a disability shall be discriminated against on the basis of that disability."

There was no public comment during that portion of the presentation and council asked no questions about the ADA document. The motion to execute the resolution for the publication of the ADA self-assessment and transition plan passed unanimously.

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HEALTH



PHOTO BY ROBERT J. NEARY PHOTOGRAPHY

AQUACARE PHYSICAL THERAPY ADDS ATHLETE TRAINING SERVICES

BY TERRY ROGERS

With the start of 2022, Aquacare Physical Therapy and Milford Lifestyle Fitness Center, located in the Milford Wellness Village, is focusing on assisting athletes from local high school and colleges with their physical therapy and sport training needs. The new program, led by Greggory Clark, will not only assist with athletic injuries but with endurance training and prevention of injuries as well.

"Mr. Clark's experience includes collegiate sports, a degree in exercise science, and is in the process of obtaining his certification as a personal trainer," Cara Konlian, MSPT, CEO, said. "He has a real passion for working with athletes. Young athletes may work with an athletic trainer at school, but often that athletic trainer does not have enough time to spend performing agility/sports-specific training as well as spending time on prevention

of injuries. Because we have physical therapists on staff, we are uniquely qualified to help these athletes."

Konlian explained that athletes can come in and pay a drop fee or join the gym which will allow them to work out with their physical therapy staff. The program will include agility training, pre-season training as well as post-season training to keep them in shape even when they are not playing their sport.

"One of the things we pride ourselves on with the Milford Lifestyle Fitness Center is that we are in a small setting," Konlian said. "There's still many concerns over COVID precautions and we are able to adhere to socially distancing. When someone comes in, they feel safer because there may only be one or two other people there."

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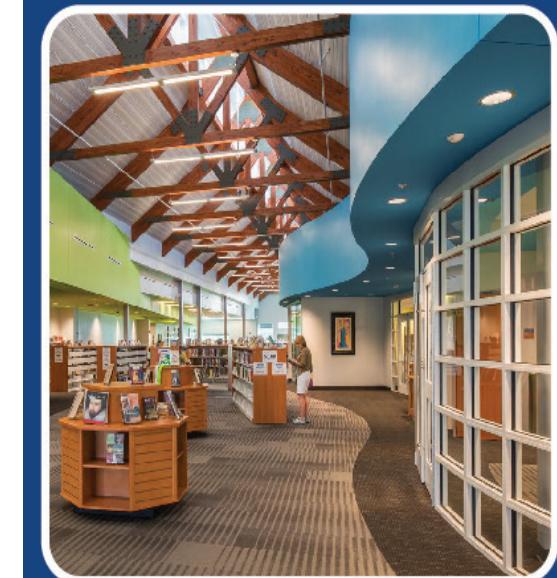
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BY TERRY ROGERS

As many hospitals began requiring all staff to be vaccinated for COVID-19, Bayhealth was one of the few healthcare systems who allowed their staff to either be vaccinated or submit to weekly tests under the recommended CDC guidelines. With a recent ruling by the Supreme Court that the federal government can require all healthcare workers to receive the COVID-19 vaccination, Bayhealth was required to change their policy.

"As valued members of our Bayhealth team, we are committed to keeping you informed about important news that affects our health system and our employees," a memorandum signed by President and CEO Terry Murphy, read. "The U.S. Supreme Court of Appeals ruled that the CMS vaccine mandate for healthcare workers at participating CMS organizations will move forward. Under the latest ruling, all eligible employees must be vaccinated no later than Feb. 28, 2022, with the first doses administered no later than Jan. 27, 2022."

BAYHEALTH TO REQUIRE VACCINES FOR ALL STAFF

The letter continued that the requirement was a condition of employment at Bayhealth. Employees who refused the vaccine would face termination no later than Feb. 28. Staff were advised to arrange for vaccine appointments through Baynet, a clinic, pharmacy or doctor's office. Anyone who had received the vaccine at a pharmacy or location other than a Bayhealth facility was asked to provide a photo or scan of their vaccine card.

"We are not getting pushback," Kevin Snyder, vice president of Marketing and Communications, said. "Staff is asking questions about the mandate and the requirements. Bayhealth is making the vaccine available to staff every day. We remain hopeful we will retain all our staff. We don't feel comfortable speculating about what percentage of staff might choose to not get vaccinated. Ultimately, every day, staff members continue to get vaccinated and continue to get their booster shots."

Snyder continued that Bayhealth was also offering additional options for staff to get vaccinated in an effort to provide the most convenience possible. He stated that the majority of the staff at Bayhealth is already considered fully vaccinated and the number continues to rise each day.

"As a community health leader for nearly 100 years, Bayhealth is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all patients, employees, physicians and visitors," Snyder said. "Bayhealth will continue to comply with the state and federal vaccine mandates as we have done so throughout the pandemic. Additionally, we continue

to urge all our employees to be vaccinated. Bayhealth is making vaccines available to our dedicated staff daily. We remain grateful for our team of caregivers and physicians who have been on the frontlines of this pandemic since day one. The important thing we want the staff to know is that we love them, we value them and they are vital to meeting the healthcare needs of the people who live in Kent and Sussex counties."

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BY TERRY ROGERS

Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition (DBCC) understands that every breast cancer survivor needs methods for staying upbeat, healthy and motivated. This is especially true of women who are diagnosed at a young age. For this reason, they offer DBCC's Young Survivors in Action, a program which is designed to connect, support, and empower young women diagnosed with breast cancer.

"Recently, DBCC's Young Survivors in Action program shifted two of their programs to help better serve breast cancer survivors by offering the programs online on DBCC's Young Survivors in Action Facebook Live Stream to help participants stay active, healthy, and connected during the pandemic" Amanda Perdue, Young Survivor in Action Program Manager said. "As a result of their success we added a third addition Healing Meditation to start in late February! The three programs highlighted this winter and spring are Sleepytime Yoga, FUNctional Fitness, and Healing Meditation. Sleepytime Yoga and FUNctional Fitness are instructed by Jessica Moyer, owner of The Ice House Wellness & Com-

DBCC'S YOUNG SURVIVORS PROMOTE MEDITATION, MEANINGFUL ACTIVITY DURING TREATMENT

munity and Healing Meditation is instructed by Melissa Bishop a master level Reiki practitioner and Meditation instructor.

Moyer began her business as a hobby, training women to get more fit through exercise. As she spent more time with them, she found that there was so much more to living a healthy lifestyle than physical activity. Moyer began to see that there was a strong mental, spiritual and emotional side to female well-being. Moyer who is friends with Amanda Perdue who directs the Young Survivors in Action program, Moyer began working with DBCC 13 years ago in order to spread the awareness of the importance of self-care and overall health.

"My journey of self-discovery took me through many dark areas of my life, including an eating disorder, anxiety attacks, the death of a child, two miscarriages, a spouse deployment, death of a parent and bouts of severe depression," Moyer said. "It took me a long time to discover my purpose which is why I started my business."

"Sleepy Time Yoga is a monthly yoga class that focuses on short- and long-term side effects from breast cancer treatment and surgeries," Moyer said. "The hour session begins with restorative yoga, a type of restful yoga that facilitates stretch, lymph movement, range of motion and relaxation. This practice is done on the floor, sitting and lying down. Sleepy Time Yoga is followed by a

10-minute meditation to focus on stress reduction and sleep facilitation."

According to Moyer, FUNctional Fitness, also offered monthly, requires no equipment and is suitable for all fitness levels. FUNctional Fitness involves strengthening and stabilizing the body for activities that are performed in everyday life. It is a fun, half-hour class that helps participants focus on their health right at lunchtime.

Healing Meditation is the newest series to live stream this month starting on Feb. 23, from 5:30-6 p.m. It is a monthly guided meditation to help you focus, de-stress, heal, and improve your intuition, and keep your life in balance. This new addition is a great tool for Young Survivors to have in their pocket not only for use at home but also during appointment wait times, cancer treatments, and post-op recoveries.

Melissa Bishop who instructs the new Healing Meditation series is a Master level Reiki Practitioner and Meditation Instructor. "After battling a drug addiction I embraced my passion of helping others and began a career in the Drug and Alcohol Treatment industry. Living by the principle: you receive by giving of yourself. I truly believe that sharing the tools and gifts that have been given to me are critical to my life's purpose," Bishop said.

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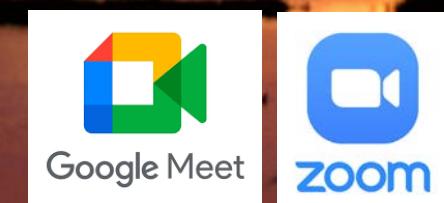


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