

Noise

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unworkable.

The councilors voting for the ordinance said that they did so because some weeks ago Police Chief Thomas Tighe and Lt. William Donovan said the police needed some law, however imperfect, to give them leverage in dealing with noise complaints. They said working without any effective law in recent years has blocked virtually all efforts to curb sources of noise.

Voting to adopt the ordinance

were Council President David Long, Vice President Julio DiGiando and Councilman William Kelly. Councilors Szepatowski and Michael Schnack voted against it.

Five residents spoke at the public hearing on the ordinance before the council voted.

Conservation Commission Chairman Christopher Powell said he encouraged the council to adopt the measure because without tools such as an ordinance the police cannot enforce any curtailment of noise.

Island resident Rosemary Woodside challenged the councilors to define decibel levels for lawnmowers, leaf blowers, and the town fire horn. DiGiando said later that without a useful ordinance, the town might have to ban all lawnmowers "and do it all by goat."

Emmett Turley of Seaside Drive said his hearing is so acute that he can hear fish jumping in the bay. His biggest torment came from workers at Quonset Point machining parts as early as 2 a.m. and the sounds "resonating across the water," Turley told the council. He said he wished he could get some relief from that problem.

Ellen Winsor of West Reach Drive supported the ordinance. The length of time a noise persists can be abusive, she said.

For some time Steve Mecca of Green Lane has complained about what he considers to be excessively loud band music coming from the Narragansett Café. Monday night he told the council that four years without a noise law being implemented "can be an eternity" to

those affected by uncontrolled noise. However, he said, the "noise friendly version offered by the council allowed decibel levels that are too high and noise measurements that are not inclusive." The new law "makes legal egregious noise," he said. "It's a sad commentary. The council is not interested in fairness," Mecca added.

Mannis, who identified herself several weeks ago as an American Civil Liberties Union volunteer lawyer, said her current draft of an anti-noise ordinance is the most defensible in terms of being Constitutional, but it is nonetheless not perfect.

The town had a long-standing noise ordinance on its books, but it had been pronounced unenforceable and therefore the same as non-existent by the current town solicitors.

The new ordinance limits noise by decibel levels measured by a decibel meter specified by the American National Standards Institute. The limits are a maximum of 75 decibels at all times in all areas of town, with the lower limits of 60 decibels between 10 p.m. and 8 a.m. in residential and open-space districts and 70 decibels between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. in those districts.

The law will be enforced by local police, not by the zoning and building official as had been done at some times in the past.

Violations of the ordinance will be subject to a written warning on the first offense, a \$25 fine for the second offense, and a \$100 fine on the third offense and any subsequent offenses.

Options

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catalyst" in getting that project off the ground, Gooding noted. "There's still so much untapped potential" yet to be discovered in the center, she added.

Gooding said that the JEF gave \$2,000 for the first year of the Teen Center, and the foundation will continue to help with funding and programming.

In the first two years of the organization, the foundation has held fund-raisers that have reaped about \$35,000 for educational offerings, Gooding said. Its annual operating budget is \$15,000, she noted.

One of the ways the JEF is spending its money is through "mini-grants" of up to \$500 each.

Gooding said that members of the community can fill out an application proposing a new program "that supports our mission," which is to provide "innovative programs that inspire young minds." Applications are currently available at both school offices, the library, and Town Hall, Gooding said.

She stressed that the applications are carefully screened to make sure the proposals are suitable for the island's children.

Approximately one-third of all the after school offerings at the Jamestown schools are funded through the JEF, Gooding said.

Spanish language instruction at the elementary level, a Scrabble club, golf lessons, and creative drama classes are a few of the JEF-funded programs, Gooding said.

The Conanicut Island Raptor Project, which helps students and adults track the migration and daily habits of the osprey that live at Marsh Meadows was partially funded through a JEF grant, Gooding said.

The JEF is looking to build its resources — both financially and in human resources — by establishing a membership roster, she said.

Since the foundation is a non-profit corporation, yearly dues of \$50 for an individual and \$100 for a family are fully tax deductible. There are also other levels of financial support, Gooding said.

Upcoming program ideas for the JEF include a teen community service component to the Teen Center, Gooding said. This would bring kids into the community, and at the same time, allow them to earn community service "points" that they can cash in for programs or field trips that interest them.

Linking teens with the island's senior citizens is another idea in the works.

"We'd like to see teens give a class in how to use e-mail" to the senior population, Gooding said.

"It's a chance for them to make connections and give back," Gooding said.

Additional members would allow the JEF to get involved in more projects, Gooding said, noting that the foundation has small board of directors and needs additional people to form sub-committees to take on certain tasks and fund-raisers.

"There are so many opportunities" for both children and adults, Gooding said.

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