

• EDITORIAL •

Time for Town Council to make deer decision

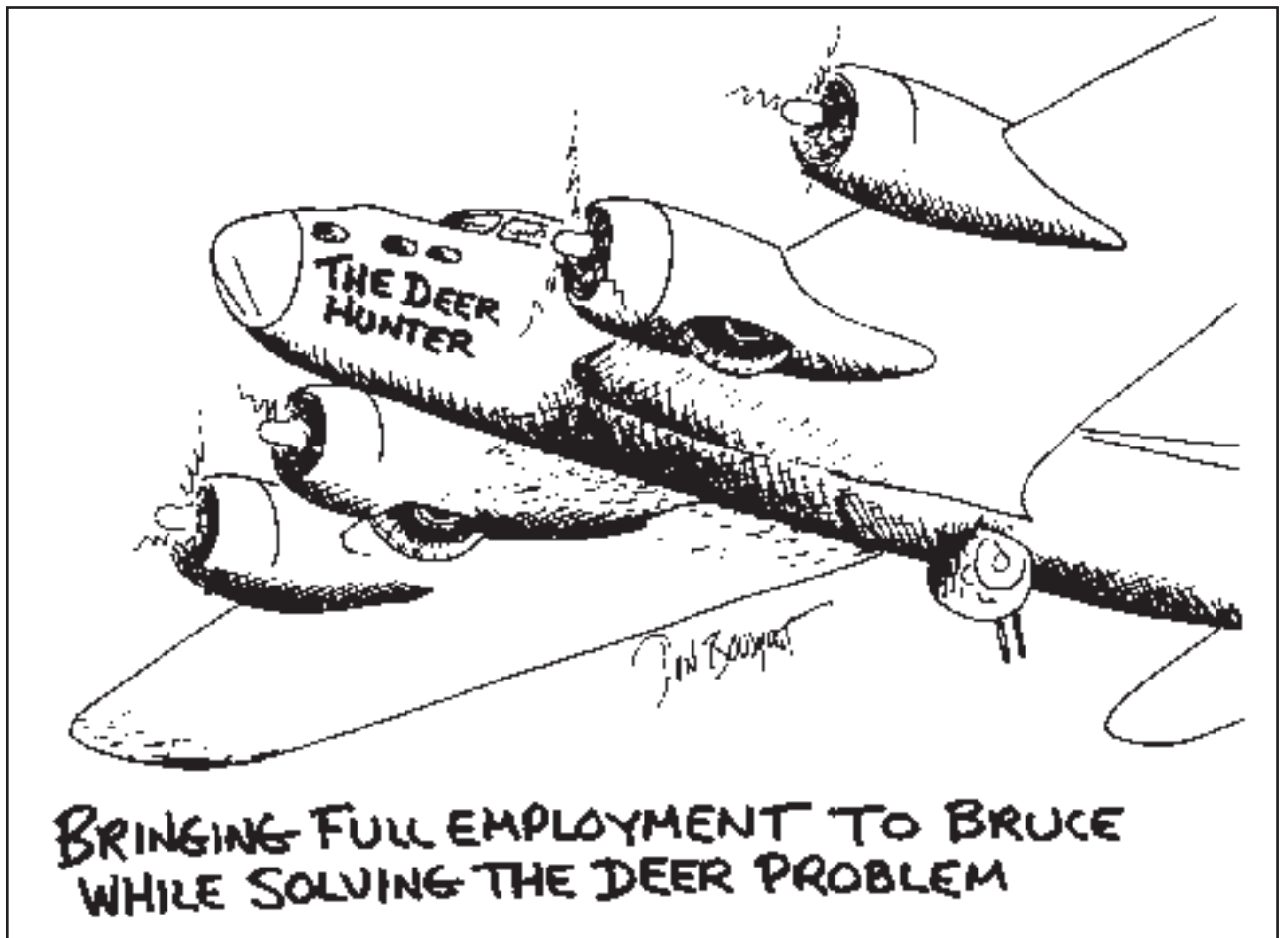
Last week's Town Council workshop with the Wildlife Committee reflected the passion surrounding the subject of deer control on our island.

There is no argument that the deer have gotten out of hand as the population grows unchecked. Many islanders are concerned about their health, believing a large deer herd means greater risk of Lyme disease. Others are upset about the havoc the deer wreak on the gardens and landscaping surrounding their homes.

A difference of opinions arises over how to control the deer. Some say that hunting is the only way to curtail the herd growth because here the deer have no natural predators. There are Jamestowners who support hunting in general but do not want people shooting guns near their homes. For good reason, too.

The anti-hunting group wants to control the deer population by non-lethal methods. The downside to this approach seems to be the high cost and the lengthy amount of time for the methods to have an impact.

There are no easy choices. It is clear, however, that the time has come for the Town Council to make a decision in the matter.



In the best interest of the community

In recent weeks, my wife and I, who live in East Passage Estates on the north end of the island, have become engaged in educating ourselves on an issue that if not decided properly has profound long-term negative implications on not only our personal health and economic welfare, but that of the entire community of Jamestown.

Specifically, I am referring to current design plans by the town, as part of a planned landfill remediation and closure process, to disturb, excavate and redistribute onsite the existing toxic landfill, located at the Jamestown transfer station in order to build a public works department highway barn.

In order to better under-

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stand and assess the technical aspects and merits of the issues, I have recently attended the following two key public meetings on the subject:

- The Jamestown landfill 50-percent design review public workshop at the Jamestown library on Feb. 1. This workshop, which was hosted by the president of our Town Council, involved a presentation by representatives of GZA engineering, under contract to the town, on the status of their 50-percent design plan for the landfill remediation, followed by a Q/A session with the public.

- The North End Concerned Citizens meeting at the Portuguese American Citizens' Club on March 5. This meeting, hosted by the NECC core members, involved a presentation by David Van Slyke, an

environmental lawyer, and former head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund Enforcement Group, and a technical representative of MACTEC Engineering, both of Portland, Maine, to provide an independent review and assessment of GZA's design plans. This review was also followed by a Q/A session with the public.

Both meetings were very enlightening. Without getting into the myriad facts, technical details and pros/cons associated with the issues, I have concluded that GZA's 50-percent design plan is highly deficient and not credible because it lacks objectivity and has some very serious technical design flaws, which if implemented, would risk very serious harm to the health and welfare of our entire community.

Specifically, its implementation would pose a still unknown but unacceptably

grave risk of groundwater contamination of the underlying aquifer embedded in the highly fractured bedrock (known for pervasive lateral migration and spreading of the groundwater) that serves as the sole source of potable well water for the private and public wells serving the families of this island community.

Given the historically chronic water shortage problems in Jamestown, I believe it would be highly irresponsible for the town's administrators to undertake in behalf of all of its citizens an action which risks jeopardizing the island's sole-source aquifer, and thereby the public health and economic welfare of all its residents. Furthermore, the resultant cleanup and litigation costs from such a potential environmental disaster would be prohibitively costly and totally unaffordable to the town and residents of this community.

Accordingly, I highly recommend that the town immediately cease all plans to disturb, excavate and re-distribute onsite the existing toxic landfill for the purpose of building a DPW facility on top of this landfill. Instead, I recommend that the town proceeds with ongoing plans to properly cap off, secure and close down the toxic landfill in accordance with and full compliance with all current, applicable EPA and state DEM regulations, and that the town finds a suitable alternative site for the DPW facility rather than on top of a toxic landfill.

I believe that an objective cost analysis of the alternative courses of action would, unambiguously, indicate that my recommendation is clearly the most cost-effective action for the long run that the town could undertake in this matter.

At the end of the March 5 meeting, I had the opportunity

to meet and speak to Barbara Szepatowski, one of the three Town Council members in attendance, as well as to Bruce Keiser, the new town administrator.

I was highly impressed that both of these individuals have extensive experience in landfill remedial and environmental cleanup issues. I am also heartened by the fact that both individuals showed a high degree of responsibility, objectivity, and enlightenment in such matters, and that they appear to have the best interests of our community at heart.

I hope and pray that they, along with the rest of the town's leadership, jointly make the right decision in this matter . . . a decision that's in the long-term best interest of this entire island community . . . which many of us call paradise!

John G. Shannon
49 Columbia Lane

The news of 10 and 15 years ago is from the Jamestown Press. The news of 25, 50, 75, and 100 years ago from the Newport Daily News comes from the collection of the Newport Historical Society.

100 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, March 8, 1906:

The volunteer firemen held their monthly practice last evening, the engine company and hose No. 1 making a run to the ferry, about a half mile from their station.

Steamer Leander Wilcox landed about 20 tons of fertilizer on Knowles's wharf this morning for Mr. A.H. Peckham.

The paymaster and clerk made their monthly visit to Fort Greble yesterday afternoon.

From the Newport Daily News, March 10, 1906:

Two persons looking for summer cottages were in town today.

75 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, March 11, 1931:

The assembly at the Thomas H. Clarke School Tuesday afternoon was in charge of Miss Doris MacKaye and the program consisted of readings pertaining to the lives of four of our American poets and recitations of selections written by them.

From the Newport Daily News, March 12, 1931:

The Jamestown Americanization class held its first session Tuesday at the Thomas H. Clarke school with 21 adults attending. Some are taking their first lessons in speaking English, as well as in reading and writing the language. Another group is composed of those who can speak English in a satisfactory manner, and are able to carry on an ordinary conversation, but wish to learn to read and write the language.



50 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, March 7, 1956:

The 300th anniversary of the purchase of Conanicut Island from the Indians by Newport founders for 100 pounds (\$280 by present day standards) will be observed with a celebration in Jamestown this summer.

From the Newport Daily News, March 8, 1956:

The Golden Age Club organized yesterday afternoon at the Jamestown Recreation Center and discussed plans for summer activities.

25 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, March 10, 1981:

The Town Council vice president last night called for a 6 percent cap on spending this next year. . . . Paul Bailey's Inc. — the lowest bidder on a new police cruiser at \$6,810 — was awarded the contract subject to review by Town Administrator Robert W. Sutton Jr.

From the Newport Daily News, March 11, 1981:

Planning Board Chairman John T. Heelan asked the Town Council Monday to seek a clarification from the attorney general's office on lack of the formal water quality section in the environmental impact statement for the Jamestown Bridge replacement.

From the Newport Daily News, March 13, 1981:

The School Committee Thursday night proposed action on

a cost-saving proposal to consolidate bus stops for Jamestown students attending North Kingstown High School. . . . Supt. Alfred J. LaMarche submitted a proposed fees schedule to charge adult groups for use of the school building. . . . The fee recommended for three hours use is as follows: school gym, \$10 minimum; classroom, \$8; recreation center, \$10; and Town Hall, \$8 minimum.

15 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, March 7, 1991:

Voters Tuesday night, after a total of nearly six hours of debate, approved a \$7.2 million budget without changing so much as one cent in the Town Council-recommended spending package.

After working seven long years, and spending approximately \$1,292,000, the public works department project to revamp Jamestown's water system will soon be completed.

10 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, March 7, 1996:

Voters at Monday's financial town meeting took 20 minutes to approve a \$10.4 million budget and lower the tax rate from \$14.57 to \$14.42 for each \$1,000 of property valuation. The 15-cent difference — in effect a delayed result of the 1993 property revaluation — means that the average homeowner with \$170,000 of property can expect a tax bill that is \$25.20 less than last year's, even though school and government spending for the new fiscal year, which began March 4, is up 8.4 percent.

"Our Town:" first JCT drama. There may not be a dry eye in the house when the final scene ends in the Jamestown Community Theatre's production of "Our Town," which will open tomorrow night at the new Senior Center on West Street.

Republican Bob Dole, with 180 votes, was the big winner here in Tuesday's Presidential Primary. . . . Some 386 voters showed up at the Community Center, where the polls were open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.