

# Forum

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alcohol is usually involved in all four of the leading causes of death of children and young people between the ages of 10 and 24. These leading causes are car accidents, unintentional injuries, suicide, and homicide, Hosley said.

Last year in Jamestown, the health curriculum began to include alcohol awareness lessons for students in grades 6 through 8, Hosley said, adding that in grade 6 there is homework that students and parents must do together to encourage dialogue about the dangers of alcohol.

Hosley said that teens and their parents and anyone who works with teens in education, recreation or in the services industries, would benefit from the discussion.

Sgt. Jack Dube, a veteran Jamestown police officer, will represent the police department at the panel discussion.

Dube said he will tell teens and their parents what the current laws are, as well as what risks teens take by drinking under age.

New laws, passed in recent years, include that minors are considered "impaired" if their blood alcohol level is .02. In adults, the threshold is .08. Dube noted "it takes one beer" to get to .02 in most people. Formerly, if a group of teens was caught drinking in a car, only the driver was charged, Dube said. Now, even if teens are caught drinking on the beach, or on the street, without any car in sight, they can lose their drivers' license, Dube added.

Another law that was recently passed is that anyone who buys a keg of beer must have their name and address written on a card attached to the side of the keg. That person will then be held accountable for anyone who becomes impaired after drinking from that keg.

"The ante has been upped" on many of the state's alcohol laws, Dube said.

Frank LaPere, owner of Grapes & Gourmet, which is a liquor store and gourmet food shop on Ferry Wharf, will be a panelist at the discussion.

LaPere's business was cited last fall as part of a sting to catch businesses who were selling alcohol to minors.

"It was a wake up call," LaPere said, noting that in the months since his business was cited, he has paid to have his entire staff of six employees trained in the TIPS alcohol training program, even though liquor stores have an option not to take the course.

He has reviewed and revised all store policies to ensure that nothing is sold to a minor, and now everyone who looks "under 30," is carded, LaPere said.

There are only four types of identification that are now accepted at the shop, LaPere said, a valid driver's license, a R.I. State ID card, a military ID, or a passport. They no longer accept out of state ID cards as proof of age, LaPere said, noting, "Sometimes we have to turn people away."

LaPere said he has been told by some of his adult customers that they have been approached by minors in the parking lot, and asked to buy some alcohol for them.

"We're aware of it," LaPere said, noting that it typically happens on weekend nights.

When the shop was caught, LaPere said, he had his license renewal held up until he appeared before the Town Council sitting as the board of Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Board. Then acting Police Chief Bill Donovan made recommendations that each of the cited businesses should follow to ensure their continued licensing, including to help educate the public on teen drinking, LaPere said.

"That's one of the reasons I'm appearing on the panel," LaPere said, "to fulfill my commitment" to the licensing board.

LaPere noted that the employee who actually made the sale to the minor was fined.

Hosley said that in the 10 years that the task force has been working with the police on the alcohol compliance checks, "we catch people nearly every time."

"It's really disappointing," Hosley said, noting that two possible causes of the businesses serving minors are "lack of training" and "young employees."

Given the stiffer penalties that have been passed, "I can't imagine why people would take the chance" on serving minors, Hosley said.

Another panelist, Jamestown Teen Co-ordinator Melissa Minto, said that while she doesn't see a problem with the teens that regularly attend activities at the island's Teen Center, "it's the one's who don't come" who may be at risk for drinking or other substance abuse.

The Teen Center is there to give them a "wide variety of activities to keep them involved," Minto said, noting that when teens are engaged and feel like part of the community they are less likely to get themselves into difficult situations.

"What I do," Minto explained, "is give them skills to combat boredom, so they won't get into trouble."

# Water

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hearing was Valerie Molloy of Columbia Avenue, who encouraged the provisions being proposed for affordable housing. She suggested that they be provided to recognize owners of properties that might need connections for conversions of existing premises to add an affordable housing unit.

Public Works Director Steven Goslee, who oversees the water and sewer departments, expressed reluctance to bill customers for the extra costs of installations. He said he expected they would "use stop watches and get into challenges" over extra charges. However, the councilors insisted it would be unfair not to bill individuals. That would mean extra installation costs would be distributed among all municipal water customers, the councilors said. Schnack suggested there would be few if any stop-watches "and if there are, we should be able to justify charges."

Council Vice President Julio DiGiando, supported by Commissioner William Kelly, championed the breaks for affordable housing. "We're pushing for affordable housing. This is another way to help it happen," Kelly said.

Council President David Long said he was "reluctant about caveats that may be loopholes. I am leery, but if we don't include (consideration for affordable housing), there may not be an option in the future."

## The Muir application

Donald Muir of Whittier Road applied in late 2004 for an extension

of the town waterline to a lot he owns at 44 East Shore Rd. that abuts the end of the municipal water district.

In January, Schnack provided his findings about the Muir's East Shore property, which were disclosed at this week's meeting. Muir "has not demonstrated that he has exhausted all avenues to locate a well on his property," Schnack wrote. He noted that Muir did not follow through on related applications he made in 1997.

Because of the island's limited municipal water supply, current regulations require an applicant for a waterline extension prove that all other possible options for water have been exhausted before the council can consider an waterline extension.

Last year, the councilors were uneasy about Muir's efforts to drill a new well were being limited to an effort to go less than 50 feet deep.

Muir was represented at this week's meeting by attorney Christopher Kehoe. Kehoe argued that the commission allowed about 50 connections and extensions over the past 10 years without the regulations making distinctions among them. He also contended that Muir was being asked to do far more than any other applicant has been required to do.

"You are taking a tougher stance than allowed," Kehoe said. He and Muir suggested that the size and configuration of the East Shore property does not allow for a well without one or more variances from the zoning board. The water from any well would also be suspect in terms meeting department health standards.

Councilor Barbara Szepatowski spoke for the Muir proposal. She said that long ago she did some engi-

neering-related work for him and more recently he has been a client of her pet business.

However, she said she has been advised that she did not have to recuse herself from the discussion and voting on his situation because she has no current business involvement with him.

Szepatowski acknowledged that she was hoping the animal shelter she is developing for the town would be a recipient of the water saving retrofits from Muir. He suggested that he donate the retrofits to offset the water usage he would be incurring if his application were approved.

The other councilors said they were struggling with the concept of the retrofit trade-off for water, but did not detail their concerns. They agreed to refer the matter, with new aspects including Kehoe's written submissions, for review by Associate Town Solicitor A. Lauriston Parks, preferably for their next meeting.

During the months Muir's application has been under consideration, he and the commissioners have also discussed his proposal to in effect offset the water he would use by paying for water-saving retrofits on either public or private property.

Muir and his family lived on East Shore Road for two years. He said during that time the water was muddy, of poor quality, under poor pressure and subject to outages. He said a doctor said his wife's miscarriage in 1998 might have been caused by the property's water supply. The family then moved to East Passage. In 2002, they moved to their present home.

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I'll start drinking in eighth grade,  
and I'll do some things I don't really want to do.  
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alcohol won't be my only problem.

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