

Fort Getty

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for the work. She noted that the new town budget, due for adoption next month for the year to start July 1, includes \$50,000 for continued committee work.

Sharp's proposal calls for relocation of both recreational vehicle and tent sites to enable the creation of a road looping around the perimeter of the 33-acre site on the West Passage of Narragansett Bay. Opening the hilltop area for improved viewing is also called for in the plan.

The relocation of the camping sites would move RV campers east and tenters from the entrance area to south of the RV sites. The relocations will cut the 104 RV sites to 86, and increase the tent sites from 15 to 20. Meagher said the loss of 18 RV sites represents those that were classified as transient, rather than full season rentals. She said the transient campers tended to be "problematic" users.

Town Councilman William Kelly commented that the seasonal arrangement was equivalent to summer homes for the users. He suggested the park would be able to compete for higher fees in the future.

Meagher summarized that changes will result "in a real park, not just a recreation area." She said at some point, the committee would ask the town to approve a bond for Fort Getty Improvements, to be paid from camping proceeds. She did not say when the committee would want the bond provided, or how

much money would be asked for. She said more engineering needs to be completed before the committee would ask for the bond to be arranged.

Town Planner Lisa Bryer referred to a three-phase approach to Fort Getty improvements. She said the next three steps would be re-organizing the camping sites during the next two off seasons: creating the circular road "opening fabulous views," developing long-term parking at the park's entrance, and layout of the new tenting area. She noted that the summer recreation program for local children will be continued, but the projected new playground and pavilion renovations were not being planned for this year.

The report

A seven-page report accompanied Sharp's landscape schematics.

The narrative, as well as Meagher's presentation, emphasized the goal to "enhance residents' use of the park, develop additional and improve existing recreational opportunities, and ensure revenues for ongoing maintenance and improvements.

Sharp noted that his plan would refurbish nearly a mile of existing roadway, remove 2,800 feet of roads, and add 2,500 feet of new roads, for a net loss of 300 feet of roadway.

He also noted that the reconfiguration of the camper sites would open more than four acres of prime water-view parkland for public enjoyment, joining with existing water views for a total of 17 acres as "public open space

amenity."

The landscape plan also provides for a "more organized and intensive water-based recreation area" centered on the existing boat ramp and pier. A new bulkhead with a clamshell parking surface at the existing pier and a new timber pier over the existing riprap area to the east of the pier access road is also called for. A major new feature will be a community sailing school with trailer parking and dinghy storage next to the boat ramp, according to the report.

Long-term aspects of the call for renovation of the Rembijas Pavilion to include restrooms with a new septic system, and enhanced facilities for beach-front banquets and events. That phase will include relocation of the volleyball court, boardwalk beach access, dune restoration, and expanded parking.

Meagher emphasized the work that the Harbor Management Committee is already doing for improvements to the waterfront at Fort Getty.

Master plan

Last year's 39-page master plan stated that Fort Getty needs improvements in all its structures — from the gatehouse and pavilion to old military fortifications in various stages of delapidation, according to that plan.

In addition to rehabilitating the pavilion, starting a sailing pro-

gram and continuing the town summer day camp, possibilities for Fort Getty include an amphitheater for concerts and other uses; maintenance and possible expansion of walking, jogging, and cycling trails; the addition of barbecue pits, bike and kayak racks; a variety of smaller covered pavilions; construction of a significant indoor recreation facility; pier, boat ramp, and mooring expansions; dingy and windsurfing/waterboard storage; better storage of park equipment; and one or more touch-and-go docks.

History

Fort Getty is listed in town records as having 32.36 acres, valued at \$2,478,000, with structures valued at \$412,000. At one time, a hospital was operated on a five-acre section. The park originally was agricultural land. It served as an outpost for both the Colonists and British to monitor ship movements during the Revolutionary War. The land was bought by the federal government in 1900 for military use and named for Col. George Getty, who had served in the Mexican and Civil wars. Fort Getty was used extensively until the 1950s, and then deemed surplus.

In 1955, the town bought the fort for \$5,500, half its appraised value at that time. Thereafter, the town worked on dealing with the hazards of the fortifications,

including closing one bunker with fill from the sewage treatment plant. Two septic fields, including the one for the hospital, are still in use, but are seen as needing replacement. Campers initiated use of Fort Getty informally, until the town organized an RV field with 20 sites in 1976. The camp sites has grown to about 85 seasonal and 20 transient sites, plus tenting, over the years. In 2004, Newsweek magazine called the tent sites at \$20 a night the "greatest recreation bargain in the United States."

Rev. Hocutt honored at conference

At the Annual Meeting of the R.I. Conference of the United Church of Christ, held in Providence May 6, Rev. A. Lee Hocutt of Jamestown was recognized for pastoral service on the 65th Anniversary of his Ordination. As an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ, he has served churches in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and after retiring, he was an interim minister in For several churches in Rhode Island.

Turgeon graduates NEIT

Matthew F. Turgeon of Jamestown graduated recently from the New England Institute of Technology with an associate's degree in video/radio production technology.



Everyone loves spaghetti!

This family was one of many that enjoyed the great supper whipped up by Boy Scout Troop 1 last weekend.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten

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