

# Cedar Lane subdivision passes preliminary review

By Michaela Kennedy

At its May 3 meeting, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the Manning family's plan for a major nine-lot subdivision at Cedar Lane. The commission also began a preliminary review of a development plan for Ray Bazzano to rebuild a multi-family dwelling at 10 Narragansett Ave.

Attorney John Murphy, representing Joseph Manning and family, told the commission, "We are in agreement" with the conditions of approval, asking for only a one-word edit.

Commissioner Richard Ventrone again brought up his disapproval of automatic sprinklers, and urged the board to include a ban in the conditions of approval.

"I would like to get support to not accept the proposal the way it is. We have a limited aquifer and rely solely on rainwater for replenishment," Ventrone said.

Commissioner Barry Holland responded that no scientific proof showed sprinklers using more water than hoses. "The aquifer is, in fact, being replenished by rain. It is also being replenished by going back into the ground. You could make the argument that watering in the early morning hours would save water," he said.

Murphy pointed out that the commission had already discussed and voted on the approval of sprinklers twice. He noted that the evidence concerning watering systems came from two sources — from George Gifford, a landscape architect, and Paul Aldinger, a hydrogeologist. "We stand by the evidence of our two experts, who say that it is better for the aquifer," Murphy said.

Ventrone motioned to prohibit sprinklers in the subdivision plan. The commission voted 4-3 against the motion. The commission went on to vote 4-1 in favor of the plan, which will now be passed on to the Zoning Board of Review.

Also in old business, attorney Bruce McIntyre, representing applicant Ray Bazzano, gave an overview of the reconfigured 10-unit multi-family dwelling plan at 10 Narragansett Ave.

McIntyre said that the applicant was "looking to restore the look of the building to the way it

was in 1885." The new plan calls for six extra bedrooms.

Commissioner Victor Calabretta drew attention to the lot lines and wording of 'above grade, below grade' in the plan. Town Planner Lisa Bryer said she would make a note of the lot coverage and also check on the below-grade variations.

Commissioner Betty Hubbard mentioned a memorandum from the town engineer, who stated his concern for water drainage flowing over onto the sidewalk.

Matt Viano from Northeast Engineers and Consultants, presented the drainage analysis and plan for the project.

Ventrone said he walked through the parking lot of the condominium building in front of the property. "The fire department said, 'We come here often to pump this out. The drainage is not right.' There is a manhole that is a gusher at Knowles Court, too," he said.

Viano expressed confidence that the cistern would be large enough to handle the added runoff. "Today, there is drainoff going into that system. We are reducing that. It's a considerably smaller watershed," he noted.

Commission Chairman Gary Girard said that Knowles Court had a lot of difficulty with water drainage during construction.

Viano said that the applicant proposed to install an underground water tank.

According to the drainage analysis report from NEC, a 3,500-gal. tank could store enough volume of runoff to accommodate the increase in runoff caused by development.

Commissioner Victor Calabretta said that the applicant would have to get an agreement from the Bay View Condominiums. "Be comfortable that your system is going to work, because of your cars (in the parking lot). The area for that pond is going to be six feet lower (due to an underground parking lot) and will be sitting in water," he warned. Calabretta described how the water would bubble out when the pipe to the cistern closed.

Bryer said that the plan would create 10 units, "and two of them should be for affordable housing."

According to the recently adopted Affordable Housing Plan,

"The inclusionary zoning ordinance will require the provision of a 20 percent of affordable units in all residential developments of four or more units."

In correspondence, John Collins of Walcott Avenue sent a letter to the planning board to point out "glaring deficiencies in our zoning laws." Collins wrote, "For the last four years, I have had to view an abandoned house wrapped in blue plastic and a blue storage container that is almost in my kitchen. To my regret, no ordinances exist in Jamestown to prevent this from happening in my back yard or yours."

Collins stood up at the meeting and said he was "looking to the board for some direction" regarding storage containers and abandoned houses. He asked the commission what the definition of a temporary storage container was in the town. "I've been looking at one for four years through my window," he added. Collins went on to note that the town has no definition of an abandoned or unoccupied house in its ordinance.

Collins, who said he has done remodeling projects, offered the recommendation that a storage container be allowed 12 to 18 months. He also suggested putting a time limit on demolition and requiring a permit.

Girard thanked Collins for his input and noted that the commission would be writing new laws this year. "Your comments are timely," he said. Girard noted the joint workshop with the Town Council and the Zoning Board of Review scheduled for May 18, to discuss the high groundwater ordinance. Girard added that a joint work session with the Chamber of Commerce was slated for June 18 "to go over economic development."

In other business, the commission approved the application for the 2006 Community Development Block Grant.

All commissioners were present.

# Chamber has new director

The Jamestown Chamber of Commerce has named Donna Olney Kohler as its executive director. Olney Kohler brings to the job over 14 years' experience in marketing, public relations, and event management, and she has operated East Bay Bed & Breakfast with her husband, Greg, since 2004.

Olney Kohler has served as a

chamber board member and secretary. She is the Jamestown representative to the Newport County Convention & Visitors Bureau board of directors, and has resigned her chamber board role to take the new position with Vicki deAngeli of Island Realty, who is now serving as the chamber's secretary.

# URI announces president's awards

Each year, the University of Rhode Island honors graduating seniors with superior academic achievement in a particular field with a President's Award for Student Excellence. Selection is based on grade-point average, as well as other criteria determined by the individual department.

Two Jamestown residents have received the awards and will be presented with them at a May 20 ceremony.

Alexis Coppola, a women's studies major and Sara Lincoln, a geo sciences major, each received the honors.

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