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Beavertail case settled through mediation

By Sam Bari and Dotti Farrington

Richard Shutt, the Beavertail Lighthouse groundskeeper and rent-free tenant who has refused to move since his lease ended last April, now has until March 31, 2007 to vacate the premises.

Associate Town Solicitor Lauriston Parks represented the town at the hearing at Newport District Court Monday. Town Administrator Bruce Keiser attended the proceedings on behalf of the town. Shutt was represented by his recently hired semi-retired lawyer, Russell Wolfgang-Smith, a specialist in landlord/tenant law.

Keiser shared the information about the proceedings with the Town Council at its Monday night meeting.

Town Councilman Michael Schnack called the outcome "ridiculous and reprehensible," after Keiser's report. "We cut (Shutt) some slack and he drug us down. He should be ashamed," Schnack said.

Councilwoman Barbara Szepatowski attempted to defend the outcome, but Schnack insisted, "There are no 'buts'." Council Vice President Julio DiGiando said, "If push came to shove, we probably would have had the same outcome. It is terribly disappointing."

Keiser said the mediated court order was clear that Shutt must move out by the end of March or

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Carol Anderson and Debbie Swistak, owners of Jamestown Designs, put the finishing touches on the store's Christmas tree in anticipation of this weekend's open house.

Photo by Jeff McDonough

Holiday happenings are everywhere this weekend

If you're not in the Christmas spirit yet, just wait!

This weekend's events will be just the thing to get everyone in the holiday groove. Coming on Saturday and Sunday are no fewer than a dozen different events for shoppers, music lovers, food lovers and those who just want to marvel at holiday lights twinkling against a winter sky. Don your sneakers, bring a wallet and stop by to visit all the shops, churches and outdoor events on the schedule below. Don't forget to greet Santa when he makes his first appearance of the year at East Ferry!

Saturday, Dec. 2 Holiday Open Houses

Many Shops along Narragansett Avenue and at East Ferry will have treats to make everyone's shopping more festive and to get them

See "Happenings" on page 17

Community Center to host teen program

By Dotti Farrington

Town Councilman Michael Schnack balked Monday about officially authorizing any town teen center, but relented and agreed that a section of the town Community Center can be assigned for "office space for teen programming."

The other councilors said that they supported space at the Community Center as the official "town teen center." They suggested that Schnack's position reflected semantics, and not concept.

Schnack had been absent at the meeting earlier this month when his colleagues sanctioned by consensus the administrative plans to

reestablish use of the Community Center as the island's official Teen Center. Council President David Long was absent from this week's meeting, but he previously made clear his support for use of the Community Center in a way that serves the town teens.

The Councilors also agreed Monday to commend Councilwoman Barbara Szepatowski for her persistence in working for solutions for town teen needs and serving as liaison with the Rhode Island Foundation that has funded much of the teen programming in

See "Teen Center" on page 18

Council to revisit deer issue

By Dotti Farrington

The Town Councilors Monday continued their focus on arranging for deer hunting on town properties, even as early reports are that there has been relatively little interest in the first approved deer hunting season at Beavertail State Park.

Residents have been torn between the need to cull the herd for survival of the deer themselves, and need to use hunting to control property damage and spread of Lyme disease by the growing number of deer on the island.

Council talks this week reflected the goal of Council President David Long to "keep conversations going about the hunt and to move forward" although he was absent Monday night.

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser said the town and the state

Department of Environmental Management, which has responsibility for wildlife management, continue to work to open town land, mainly the 53-acre North Pond reservoir property, for deer hunting, and to reach out to encourage private property owners to allow hunting on their land.

Councilwoman Barbara Szepatowski proposed that the town appoint its employees, mainly members of its Department of Public Works, as delegated hunters on town land. She said the town employees who hunt are known to be responsible workers and hunters, and their being delegated as town hunters "could show us how it can be done well and safely." Keiser said it would be important to emphasize the distinction and separation between their official town

See "Deer" on page 10



Mittens needed

Employees at Town Hall are collecting mittens, scarves, and hats for the less fortunate in a basket at the town clerk's desk. Bottom, from left are Pat Westall and Arlene Petit. At rear are Kim Turcone and Karen Montoya.

Photo by Jeff McDonough

Federal grant helps pay for island forest

By Michaela Kennedy

At its Nov. 21 meetings, the town Tree Preservation and Protection Committee reviewed its final budget for the 2005 America The Beautiful Grant. Last May, the U.S. Forest Service awarded Jamestown a grant of \$5,000, matched with over \$19,000 in local funds for the development of a school forest park and a street renovation project. The federal funding is channeled through the state Department of Environmental Management's Division of Forest Environment and the Rhode Island Tree Council.

As part of his report, Tree Warden David Nickerson gave the committee a copy of the final budget submitted to the ATB program. The budget accounted for local funds spent and included hours spent by volunteers and the town's public works department. Time and materials were listed for street tree plant-

ing, creation of the Town Forest, and beautification of the traffic island at High Street and Walcott Avenue.

The committee recognized local support for the projects, which translated into \$2,900 of volunteer work hours from Largess Forestry, Kinder Tree Service, Highline Tree Service, Nickerson Tree Service, and the Boy Scouts, as well as other local volunteers.

In a reference to the street renovation plan, the tree warden noted that the original grant included structural soil installments on Narragansett Avenue, but the state Department of Transportation delayed the work until the next fiscal year.

Explaining the need for renovation, Nickerson said, "(On) Some places on Narragansett Avenue, the concrete upheaves from air pockets and moisture. Roots penetrate and lift the sidewalk." He added that the specially designed structural soil, a

substance that soaks up and holds moisture, "meets engineering needs and creates a good growing environment for the tree roots."

In a discussion of new plantings at the traffic island, a contentious debate ensued concerning what legal authority the tree committee had to authorize plantings.

The committee voted 5-1 in favor of supporting the new plantings to remain at the corner triangle of Walcott Avenue and High Street.

Tree Committee Chairman Emmett Turley, the only vote against the motion made by committee member Patrick Driscoll, claimed that no plan for the plantings had been reviewed and approved by the committee. "I want to know a plan for trees that are planted and would like to know an irrigation system to be sure that the trees will be taken

See "Forest" on page 17