

## Councilors

Continued from page 1

about wanting to avoid a learning curve as much as possible.

The three councilmen seemed to agree that a major area for legal guidance involved land uses in terms of planning and zoning ac-

tions. Szeptowski said she saw the major need as that of the council needing legal guidance "about what we can do and what we can't do."

Each councilman said that the need to name a solicitor arose because Associate Solicitor Lauriston Parks asked to do all the town's legal work after he was

not re-appointed town solicitor in North Kingstown. Harsch, who was the town's lead solicitor, had agreed to end his association with Parks a year ahead of schedule. Schnack said he appreciated the work Harsch and Parks had done, "but I want a firm not an individual." DiGiando said Parks asked for the change and Harsch "did too." Kelly also said both Parks and Harsch sought the change.

Kelly noted that Harsch could have an interview if he chose. Harsch said he wanted one. He emphasized Monday that he was willing to compete for a new arrangement, but that he had not sought an end to partnership with the town or with Parks. "I want to make it clear that (Parks) sought the change. I was satisfied with the arrangement. He is competent. I was puzzled by what happened."

Harsch also said that work as Jamestown's solicitor "has been gratifying. I understand the need for change. It is unfortunate about the extent of change." He suggested the councilors might be making a choice "that reduces the quality of service and creates learning curves."

As part of his response about wanting an interview, Harsch said the apparent preference for the Ruggiero team might not be the

best decision for avoiding learning curves. He spoke well of Ruggiero generally, but said Ruggiero's associates had limited land-use experience and would have to go through "learning curves" if hired by Jamestown.

Councilor Schnack said Harsch's criticism of any other attorney was "distasteful." Harsch defended his right to speak on the matter. The two dueled as DiGiando more than once called, "Gentlemen, cease and desist." When they did stop, after only a few more jabs, DiGiando said, "This is uncomfortable to do." He then assigned the town administrator to schedule further interviews.

### Interviews

The council had interviewed seven individual lawyers or groups of lawyers who want to take over the consortium of attorneys serving as Jamestown town solicitors for the last four years.

The councilors wanted to conduct the interviews in executive session, but several months ago in a legal advisory on open meetings and public access, Harsch ruled that contractors, including professionals in several categories, were not town employees and therefore not entitled to closed meetings as provided for town personnel.

## Storm

Continued from page 1

ping temperatures made the roads slippery and hazardous on Valentine's Day morning. As a precaution, many schools were closed in Jamestown, North Kingstown, Middletown, and the surrounding area. Although the storm came in with a whimper, winter-like weather was still expected. The day promised high winds with rain, sleet, and snow in the evening that could accumulate to several inches. Nonetheless, most Jamestowners remained optimistic.

The highway department at Fort Wetherill was a flurry of activity as men readied machinery and equipment on Tuesday afternoon. Chris Russell of the highway department said, "We're ready to go. We've checked all the equipment and everything is up and running perfectly. Our protocols are in place, so we are prepared for anything. No matter what happens, everybody knows what to do and when to do it."

"Salt and Ice Melt is selling like mad," said Steve Sherman of Jamestown True Value Hardware on Narragansett Avenue, around 5 p.m. on Tuesday. "We've only sold half a dozen shovels, though." A few minutes later, a McQuade's Marketplace employee said, "We've had a run on milk and bread, but that's about all. I think people are just getting ready to hunker down — not go outside."

On Wednesday morning, Heidi Lessard of the Secret Garden said that the weather wasn't going to hinder Valentine's Day deliveries. "I have five trucks on the road, and so far, everything will be delivered as planned," she said.

Although temperatures were forecast to rise during the day and turn snow and sleet into rain, meteorologists anticipated the mercury to plummet in the evening and overnight, which would freeze the rain. The combination of freezing rain and sleet would quickly ice the roadways. Blustery winds out of the northeast promised to bring the wind chill factor into single digits and make driving even more hazardous.

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