

Golf course lease extended to current operators

By Dotti Farrington

The town has renewed its lease with Joseph and Harriet Mistowski to continue operation of the nine-hole municipal golf course that is part of the Conanicus Island Center Island District of more than 1,000 contiguous acres of protected land.

The town and the Mistowskis shared the prestigious 2006 Business of the Year award of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. The honor was given a few months ago for the local work advancing the society's environmental mission, especially by the innovative water conservation practice of using recycled wastewater for irrigation purposes at the golf course.

The lease provides that the Mistowskis will operate the course under terms modified to reflect negotiated payments to the town, to continue improvements, and to operate the special watering system and extend it to ball fields at the town's school complex a few miles from the course.

The lease, approved by a 4-0 vote of the Town Council at its Feb. 26 meeting, will run five years, with option for renewal for an additional five years. Terms are that the Mistowskis will pay a combined flat fee of \$172,000 next year to operate the course and as calculated for each of the succeeding years. Previous leases involved a flat fee, most recently \$90,000

a year, plus 10 percent of greens fees, season passes, punch cards and golf cart rentals, which totaled nearly \$67,000 for the past year, according to Town Administrator Bruce Keiser. He also explained to the council that the new lease was negotiated using consumer price indexing to be applied to the percentage plan, so that portion of the lease costs will not have to be renegotiated each year, but only at the time of option renewal.

The course operator, or the successor, will pay \$8,000 a year for each of 20 years for its 50 percent share of the irrigation system. Keiser reported that the Mistowskis offered to oversee, at their costs without profit or overhead, the extension of the irrigation system to the school ball fields and to maintain it, in cooperation with the town baseball and soccer groups that operate youth leagues using the fields. Details of that arrangement still are to be completed. For the system to be installed, it may involve closing the fields for a year for the turf to become fully established, which would result in the leagues having to make other arrangements for spring and fall games and events.

The lessees also agreed to continue the capitol improvements program that has been in place, for such items as the equipment maintenance shed most recently. The commitment calls for \$600,000 to

be invested in the property over 10 years, or an average of \$60,000 a year. Keiser noted that all obligations of the lease "run with the lease and not the lessees" in case there is a change of operators. It was also noted that no change is anticipated by any of the parties involved.

In discussing the lease, councilors expressed high praise for the course operations, for condition of the greens, and for the town's gaining the Miskowskis' knowledge to install and maintain the irrigation system at the school fields.

The system that is about two years old is due for improvements for which funding was approved by councilors last year. The system is being funded through the town's golf course fund derived from lease proceeds. The town had been providing the wastewater from the sewer treatment plant but determined last year that it must install a special filter to continue the system in compliance with most recent health regulations.

The filter will be installed as part of the sewer treatment plant renovations that are to be done this year. Costs of the renovation will be billed to residents who use the town sewer system, but the sewer bond does not include funds for the special filter.

The town has been leasing the golfing premises to New England Golf Course Management, doing business as the Jamestown Golf and Country Club, and also known as the Caddy Shack (restaurant) that is located within the clubhouse building. Principals in the corporation are Joseph Mistowski as president and his wife Helen Mistowski as vice president. In another environmentally distinctive action, they recently planted nine acres of the course with native grasses and planted 45 trees in coordination with the town tree program leaders.

The present clubhouse was established in 1901 on the Littlefield-Clarke farm, on the south side of the course and moved about 1951 to its present location on Conanicus Avenue. The town purchased it in 1986, and has been

leasing it to the Mistowskis since the 1990s. The town originally had a volunteer advisory committee overseeing the course operations, but disbanded the committee in 2004, to enable direct council and administration oversight.

The course contains 74.36 acres, assessed at \$1.3 million, and the clubhouse consists of 9,136 square feet assessed at \$950,000.

The town originally leased out part of the clubhouse for private business use and in the past few years used it for some town recreation programs. The town started using part of the clubhouse in October as its temporary Town Hall. A new town hall complex is to be built at its historic location on Narragansett Avenue, by renovating the original Town Hall and combining it with a new two story structure in coming months.


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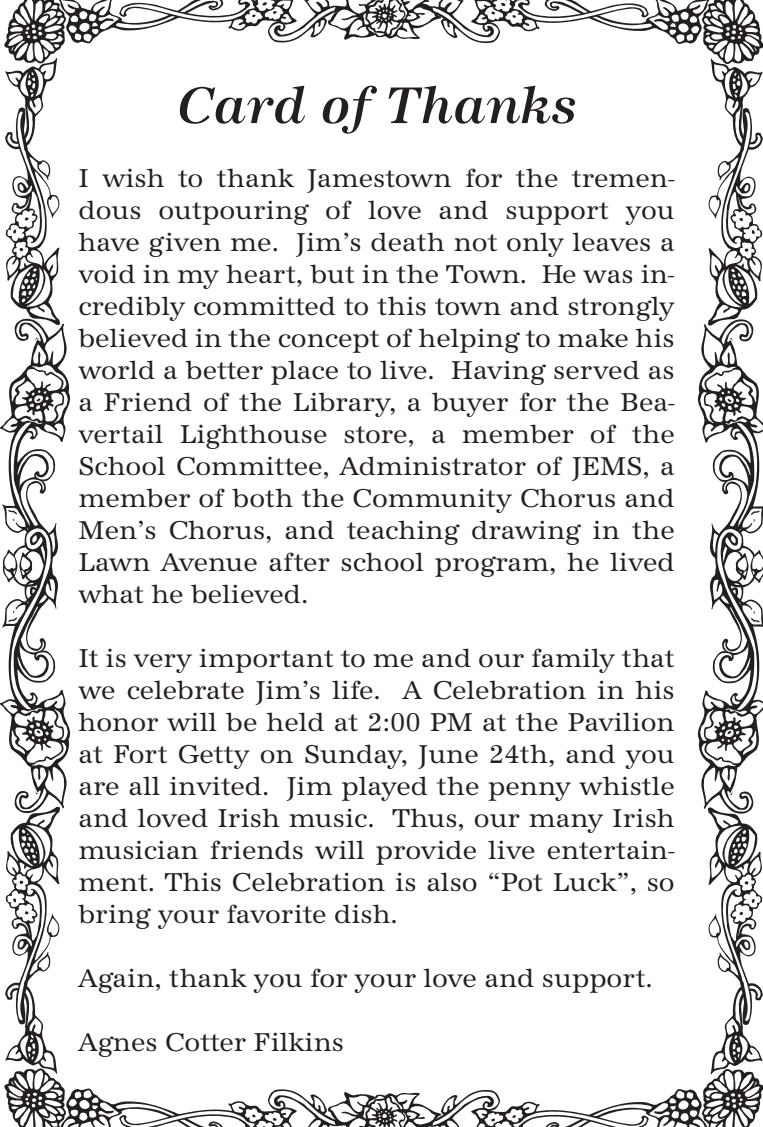
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Card of Thanks
 I wish to thank Jamestown for the tremendous outpouring of love and support you have given me. Jim's death not only leaves a void in my heart, but in the Town. He was incredibly committed to this town and strongly believed in the concept of helping to make his world a better place to live. Having served as a Friend of the Library, a buyer for the Beavertail Lighthouse store, a member of the School Committee, Administrator of JEMS, a member of both the Community Chorus and Men's Chorus, and teaching drawing in the Lawn Avenue after school program, he lived what he believed.
 It is very important to me and our family that we celebrate Jim's life. A Celebration in his honor will be held at 2:00 PM at the Pavilion at Fort Getty on Sunday, June 24th, and you are all invited. Jim played the penny whistle and loved Irish music. Thus, our many Irish musician friends will provide live entertainment. This Celebration is also "Pot Luck", so bring your favorite dish.
 Again, thank you for your love and support.
 Agnes Cotter Filkins


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