

# Garage

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which had been subject to a land acquisition from the Rhode Island Bridge and Turnpike Authority (RIBTA), is not far from a proposed site which was overwhelmingly rejected by voters on lower Taylor Point in 2004. Meanwhile, Lot 47, which had been purchased by the town specifically for the purpose of constructing a public works facility, had been recommended twice by town committees, but had come under intense opposition by north end residents in recent years.

## Delays Resolved

In previous council meetings, a decision over the location of the highway barn was delayed for several reasons involving both Lot 47 and the RIBTA property. Prior to the council's vote, Town Administrator Bruce Keiser reported affirmatively on each of those issues.

Regarding Lot 47, Keiser had reported in May that two developments had delayed his final review of the site.

The first related to concerns brought up by the North End Concerned Citizens to the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) regarding additional permitting over the traffic pattern at the transfer station. According to Keiser, DEM Director W. Michael Sullivan had deferred any decision to his staff. Consequently, Keiser reported that the existing plan could proceed, but indicated that he had asked the town's engineers, GZA Environmental, for a cost estimate should the town in fact need to excavate per DEM recommendations.

The second involved is Lot 48, which abuts the proposed barn site at Lot 47. According to Keiser, Lot 48 is still subject to a wetlands permit approval, which if denied, could disrupt the town's landfill closure plan thereby delaying construction on Lot 47 as well.

In the most recent development surrounding the transfer station site, Keiser also reported on a proposal to purchase Lot 47 by a neighboring homeowner. After placing a Request for Proposals (RFP) last week, the town officially received an offer of \$150,000 to purchase Lot 47 for restricted passive use from the same homeowners with conditions that the town abandons both Cedar Street and the lower portion of Prospect Avenue in order to create a unified parcel. Should the bid be accepted, the town will reserve the right to cancel the sale for whatever reason up to the time of closing. It is scheduled to be heard at the next regular council meeting.

In the final previously unresolved issue surrounding the barn location, Keiser reported that the RIBTA board of directors officially had approved the sale of the Taylor Point property to the town for a total amount of \$97,500. According to Keiser, the town originally had submitted a purchase price of \$90,000, which was countered by the Bridge Authority at \$125,000. That total of \$97,500 includes the cost of two appraisals and various legal and environmental outlays incurred by RIBTA over the town's purchasing inquest.

According to Keiser, should the bridge authority site be approved by voters, the town would

also assume any additional legal or environmental costs beyond an initial few thousand dollars, which RIBTA has agreed to pick up.

## Council Members Weigh In

With the town's various concerns sufficiently addressed, council members took the opportunity to publicly voice their opinions between Lot 47 and the Taylor Point facility prior to casting their official votes.

Voicing support for the Taylor Point property, Councilor Barbara Szepatowski expressed regret over the divisiveness that the highway barn decision has created. Saying that she was "greatly saddened by what's gone on over the last year and a half," Szepatowski sought to deflect criticism away from north end residents for creating a two-site controversy by taking sole responsibility for once again proposing the Taylor Point area as an alternative to Lot 47.

According to Szepatowski, an environmental engineer, "in the end, I do not believe that a highway barn should be located on or near the landfill." Szepatowski, who said she had met with 56 island residents to discuss the highway barn issue, thanked everyone who had taken the time to express their feelings on the issue with her but concluded "my feelings have always been you leave a landfill alone."

Councilman William Kelly disagreed. Kelly, who described the town's current highway facility as

"absolutely deplorable," said that he was convinced that Lot 47 represented the best option.

In an animated presentation in which he outlined the process of safely capping the landfill, Kelly cited his experience as a longtime public works director to advocate for the safety and economy of Lot 47. Kelly also argued that despite their objections, north end residents would actually benefit from a highway barn in their neighborhood. Specifically warning north end residents should the Taylor Point property be approved "don't feel you have won," Kelly argued that a catch basin could be built to provide the fire department with additional resources in the event of a fire in the north end.

Councilman Michael Schnack echoed Kelly's sentiments and added that the threat of lawsuits or the loss of popularity would not influence his decision. Schnack said that the reports he had seen by both the state and the town did not indicate that a highway barn facility at Lot 47 would be a threat to residents' wells or the town's water supply. In fact, citing residential activities such as boat washing and chemical-laden lawn and garden maintenance, Schnack argued that "the biggest threat to our wells" is homeowners themselves.

"I've looked at both sides; I've visited both sides" Schnack said "I believe that the best location is at Lot 47."

# Pier

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Councilor Michael Schnack said that the town needs to "look at what makes sense today," and proposed a joint work session for sometime in late July with the Harbor Management Commission to determine the scope and the need of the project going forward.

Also, in a bow to the town's heated highway barn vote, which was also on the agenda earlier that night, Schnack concluded by slyly saying, "In conclusion, I'd like to move that the wood pile pier be moved to Lot 47."

## In other business:

In the open session, Charlotte Zarlengo, president of the Jamestown Shores Association asked council members to refrain from

making any decisions regarding the proposed mooring field at Head's Beach pending the outcome of two separate water quality studies.

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser requested a special meeting of the town council for Thursday, June 29 to discuss the Town's farmland buyback effort.

# Amanda Thran receives honor

Amanda Thran of Jamestown was the recipient of the William F. Whitehouse cup, awarded every year for outstanding academic achievements, at the June 13 graduation of St. Michael's School in Newport.



Kyle Rafferty

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	Blueberry Pie ..... <b>\$9.99</b> ea.
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