

# Authority's sale of property to town a good neighbor gesture

By Dotti Farrington

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser said last week that he was sorry that his comments in mid-June about delays with a decision on a site for a new highway barn were interpreted by the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority (RITBA) as blame for the delays.

Keiser said his comments were meant to detail the time needed to

pursue various aspects of barn decision-making and his comments to the council were not intended to be blame the authority for the way it was handling its role.

The town has been talking for two decades about choosing a location for a barn to replace a small town garage in disrepair at Fort Wetherill.

David Darlington, chairman of the authority, said June 20 that he

was upset that Keiser's comments were reported as blame of RITBA officials for delays in getting information.

Darlington said the town had not used authority offers to conduct special meetings if necessary, as well as other efforts to respond to the town's request. "We could not have done anything else to be more available," he commented.

Darlington also reviewed le-

gal and engineering costs needed to investigate "bogus claims of dumping on the land." The study some months ago disclosed no dumping or existence of pollutants. The town asked for the study after a resident reported improper disposal of paint or chemicals during maintenance of the bridge.

The RITBA chairman said the authority originally priced the land for the town at \$125,000 to include all future costs that might be incurred by bridge officials. The town chose to negotiate the terms.

The bridge authority considered a 50 year lease at \$5,000 a year and the town countered with a 20 year lease at \$7,000 a year. Darlington said both sides had negotiated strongly. He said RITBA was not looking to sell any of its holdings, but considered the town request "as a good neighbor." He said a lease was not in the best interests of the authority.

At its latest meeting, RITBA agreed to sell the land for \$97,500, including costs to date, and terms that provide that the town will pay any other legal and engineering costs that might be incurred by RITBA to complete the transfer.

Bridge authorities did not itemize the land, legal and engineering costs. Darlington noted that two appraisals were reviewed, as well

as costs. He said RITBA's terms were extensive and included consultation about barn design because the deal would put the town barn so close to the bridge deck. He said the town needs to be aware of such factors as snow and ice removal flinging material onto the barn roof.

Darlington said the town could not expect the bridge authority to take responsibility for such future events and the town would need to design its building to reflect awareness about such factors.

The authority action included a stipulation that the land would revert to RITBA if it were not used.

Involved is 6,000 to 7,000 square feet of land, to be fixed exactly based on barn design coordinated with space for bridge maintenance needs. The land is near Bayview Drive and near the Newport westward bridge abutment. It would be used in conjunction with abutting town property at Taylor Point where the town has its sewer treatment plant.

## Bush to speak at War College today

By Dotti Farrington

The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority (RITBA) last week authorized \$5,100 for extra round-the-clock security because of a triple burden of activity this week and next.

The Rhode Island State Police-based security was ordered for the visit of President George Bush as part of major events at the Naval War College (NWC) in Newport, as well as the Tall Ships presence in Narragansett Bay in the bridge area. The week's events include fireworks displays both Friday, June 28, and Wednesday, July 4.

## Busy fourth for the island band

The Jamestown Community Band will march in the North End parade in the morning and present a concert at Mackerel Cove before the fireworks start on July 4.

Music will include patriotic pieces such as "America the Beautiful," and the "Armed Forces Salute." John Philips Sousa marches and swing tunes such as "Big Band Bop," "Chattanooga Choo Choo," and "Salute to the Duke," will have everyone tapping their toes.

The band will begin playing at Mackerel Cove about 45-minutes prior to the start of the fireworks display, which is scheduled for 9:15 p.m.

Traffic from about a quarter of a million visitors for the events was the main focus of the RITBA extra security contingent. The trooper presence was intended to enable more efficient communication and dispatch of added security as might be needed, authority officials said.

Other agencies cited plans for security for the Tall Ships, particularly to establish boundaries around the Tall Ships and other craft on the bay. Details of added security arrangements for the week were not made public.

The office of President Bush confirmed late Friday that he would speak at the Naval War College this morning at an international military symposium for the 50th anniversary of the NWC Naval Command College for an expected 1,600 top ranking military officials from around the world who studied there over the years. The President was to speak to the military leaders about "the global war on terror," according to his press office.

Reports about the Bush visit said it was the first for the Republican president to the predominantly Democratic state, and will leave Vermont as the only state he has not visited during his presidency.

Gov. Donald L. Carcieri invited Bush several months ago, according to the governor's press office. The governor was scheduled to host other Republican governors

at the Hyatt Regency Newport on Goat Island for talks on education and finances. They then were to attend a clambake at the Eisenhower House at Fort Adams State Park. The confirmation of the President's visit to Newport did not specify plans for his attendance at the Hyatt and Fort Adams programs.

The President was expected to go from Newport for a vacation of unspecified length at his family's seaside home in Kennebunkport, Maine.

Leaders of the Rhode Island Community Coalition for Peace, based in Providence, said members were planning a presence in Newport during the Bush visit to give their message that they support an end to the war in Iraq.

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