

Barn

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ever note that RITBA was seeking an easement for access to the bridge for maintenance purposes on the backside of the building.

Keiser also addressed concerns over the perception that locating the highway barn at Taylor Point would result in a dual or split facility. According to Keiser, despite popular perception, town workers do not currently, and would not be expected in the future, to make daily material trips to the North Road facility. "The reality," Keiser asserted, "is that it's not a split site."

Currently, the town, which maintains a regularly used asphalt container unit behind the town offices on Southwest Avenue is operating under a split facility scenario. However, once the Taylor Point facility is constructed, Keiser said he expects that facility to be moved to the new barn complex, thereby centralizing the town's highway operations.

Keiser did concede that the town would continue to use the transfer station in order to store the town's catch basins and drainage pipes, which he estimates are used five to six times per year.

Also, with respect to concerns over a RITBA request that the town foot the bill for any legal and engineering costs associated with the transaction completion above that already incurred by the authority, Keiser assured council members and residents that negotiations have been proceeding and he did not expect those costs to be excessive or protracted.

Finally, Keiser sought to set the record straight regarding reported

opposition of DPW union members to the siting of the proposed facility. Calling it a case of "not in my backyard syndrome," Keiser noted that a recent vote taken by the union in which three members opposed the proposed Taylor Point facility did not come from Highway Division members. Rather, they came from Water and Sewer Division workers, whose facility would be about the new highway garage.

The real challenge, according to Keiser is aesthetic.

"Will you be able to see the roofline from Freebody?" Keiser rhetorically asked. "Here and there; will you be able to see the roofline from Potter's Cove?" he went on. "No." And from the bridge? According to Keiser, motorists traveling at 60 mph will be able to see the structure for a total of approximately three seconds.

Further landscaping has also been discussed as a means to obstruct the view of the new facility. Asked if additional landscaping had been included in the referendum or budget, Keiser responded it hadn't, but that he "wouldn't be going out on a limb, so to speak, to say that it couldn't be done."

Jamestown Shores Tax Sales

Former Town Solicitor Larry Parks reported on the status of the town's project to process several dozen tax sale properties which are currently eligible for foreclosure.

According to Parks, nine lots are active in Newport superior court, three of which the town has received absolute title to and six additional lots, which are pending.

The lots, which have been purchased by the town at tax sales over the course of several decades, dating as far back as the 1930s, are subject

to redemption by the private landowners or their family at any time for up to fifty years. At that time, the lot automatically becomes town property. The town is trying to speed up that foreclosure process by filing petitions with Rhode Island court.

The project stems from increased activity on behalf of developers to take ownership of suitable lots by approaching delinquent landowners whose properties are subject to tax sale and making an offer of purchase. The solution, according to Parks, is to file a petition for the right of redemption in court to foreclose on the property and assume absolute title. That process generally takes about one month, according to Parks.

Parks, who has been working with title attorney Paul Sollitto for several years to determine the best course of action for the town, is being compensated from the town's Water Protection Fund.

According to Keiser, five lots have already been purchased through that fund. "Time will tell," on the actual cost for each case's associated title work and legal fees, according to Parks, however he estimates that each case would cost between \$2,000 and \$3,000 to process.

Highway barn groups identified

There are two different groups with advertisements in this week's Press concerning the town highway facility site debate.

Taxpayers for a Sensible Highway Barn is led by Christine Ferguson.

Jamestowners for a Town Highway Barn NOW! is led by George Souza.



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Our island was purchased in 1657 from the Narragansett Indians by a group of well-to-do Newporters who needed pasture for their livestock. The following year, Joshua Fisher surveyed the island. His survey showed how the land was apportioned among the different buyers and first delineated the properties that are now owned by the Dutra, Neale, and Ceppi families.

It is only luck that these properties remain pasture today, 350 years later, but we now have the opportunity to insure that they will remain pasture forever. We cannot afford to rely on luck any longer.

We are halfway to our goal of raising \$4 million by September 30. We need your help. Please send your tax-deductible contributions to the Conanicut Island Land Trust, Save the Farms Challenge, P.O. Box 106, Jamestown, RI 02835.

For more information, please contact Quentin Anthony at 847-1008, Craig Amerigan at 423-3537, Mike Swistak at 294-3304 or Arthur Milot at 423-1858, or visit our website at www.conanicutlandtrust.org



P.O. Box 106, Jamestown RI 02835

Save the Farms Challenge

Ad paid for by the Conanicut Island Land Trust.