

Head's Beach mooring field strongly opposed

By Sam Bari

The Harbor Management Commission was confronted by a contingent of more than a dozen Jamestown Shores Association members at its regular meeting on Aug. 8. Led by association president Charlotte Zarlengo, the group attended the meeting to oppose designating town-owned Jamestown Shores Beach, known locally as Head's Beach, as a mooring field.

Association member Kristin Kennedy said, "Unless something is wrong with the Press, I read that the Harbor Commission planned a pump-out facility and moorings are going to be added."

However, the only article in the Jamestown Press agreeing with her allegations was a July 26 Planning Commission report that referenced a statement made by Planning Commissioner Richard Ventrone. The report said, "As liaison to the Harbor Management Commission, Ventrone reported that the harbor commissioners discussed adding more moorings and a pump-out facility at the Jamestown Shores Beach." The statement made by Ventrone was verified in the Planning Commission minutes, but the Harbor Commission minutes from the meeting Ventrone attended did not agree.

At the beginning of the meeting, chairman Michael de Angeli, holding the clip from the Press, said he regretted that Ventrone was not present, because he

wanted to ask him why, or if he did, in fact, say that. He also noted, "Ventrone, who is supposedly the Planning Commission liaison to the Harbor Commission, has only attended one of the last seven meetings."

He continued to say that had Ventrone been present at the meetings when the mooring fields were discussed, he would know better. Planning Commission Chairman Gary Girard, who attended the harbor meeting with the Shores contingency, said he would talk to Ventrone about his poor attendance record.

The only reference in the Press to pump-out facilities by the harbor commissioners when discussing the mooring fields was in a report published May 21 that said, "This would require offering regular pump-out facilities," a requirement to bring a mooring field into compliance. Regular pump-out facilities meant offering the services of a pump-out boat on a regular basis or on request. No mention was ever made of installing a shore-side pump-out station at the town-owned beach.

Ventrone's statement fueled shores association members concerns about the Head's Beach mooring field being expanded and a pump-out station being installed, which according to de Angeli and the other commissioners was "just not true."

De Angeli said that adding moorings to the Head's Beach mooring area was never a consid-

eration. Robert Bowen and Terry Jones concurred with de Angeli, saying that just the opposite was a repeated topic at several meetings.

De Angeli interrupted Kennedy after she made her allegations and said he "had repeatedly said the commission had no choice but to comply with Coastal Resource Management (CRMC) regulations." He added that established mooring areas in non-compliance were required by the CRMC to be designated as mooring fields or the number of moorings in the field had to be reduced to four riparian moorings or less.

He went on to say that the Shores Association's repeated complaints about the requirements were redundant and a waste of the commission's time when it was not in a position to change CRMC or Department of Environmental Management (DEM) rules. Zarlengo stood up and shouted at de Angeli, saying, "Don't you be condescending!"

De Angeli apologized and said he was not trying to be condescending, but that it was frustrating to keep repeating himself about a matter that the commission had no control over. Then Commissioner Jones explained again that the mooring designation was a CRMC requirement, not a Harbor Commission decision.

At the end of the meeting, de Angeli again apologized for his candor and explained that the Head's Beach mooring field

could only contain as many moorings as the shore-side facilities could support. Since parking was limited to twenty cars, and had to serve swimmers, boaters, and kayakers alike, CRMC regulations would not allow additional moorings to be installed.

Zarlengo argued that moorings had been added in the last five years, and that the mooring field was a danger to swimmers. She also said the boats would effect the Class 1 DEM water designation, declaring the area as environmentally sensitive.

According to the harbor office and the CRMC Red Book, the Jamestown Shores Beach area was not classified as a Class 1 area. The area including the mooring field is a Class 2 area, which means it is designated for light boating and recreation.

Harbormaster Sam Paterson said that in the last five years, one riparian mooring was commissioned in 2005 and two class 2b moorings were commissioned in 2004. He noted that all three moorings were not new, but replaced moorings that had previously been de-commissioned. The other 19 moorings were commissioned between 1992 and 2000.

He also said "no wake" buoys surrounded the swimming area, and added that the mooring field had been moved to the north of the beach used by swimmers. He continued to say that the moorings and boats did not endanger the swimmers at all.

After the meeting Zarlengo said, "de Angeli's rudeness, arrogance, and condescending attitude toward Shores Association members would not be tolerated."

In other business:

- Town Council liaison Julio DiGiando questioned the use of government grant money being spent on a pump-out facility for the steel pier at East Ferry, because the pier is leased to a private corporation. "Since my boat is not kept at a Conanicut Marina dock or mooring, I am not guaranteed the right to use the pump-out," DiGiando said. Commissioner Bowen agreed with DiGiando and deAngeli said he would look into the matter with the town solicitor.

- Police Chief Thomas Tighe reported that Professor Otto Gregory from the University of Rhode Island will perform tests on the harbormaster's boat next week to establish the source of the galvanic corrosion that has seriously damaged the recently commissioned vessel.

- Harbormaster Paterson reported that the pump-outs at East and West Ferry are fixed and in good operating order. He also reported that the Maple Avenue kayak rack is in place. All but two of the 16 permits available for the rack have been sold.

- Zarlengo said that of the 14 boats on land at Head's Beach, only five had permits. Paterson said he would look into the matter.

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