



# THE JAMESTOWN PRESS

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## Sliding through life

These kindergarten kids took a break from their studies Tuesday to give the slide a go at the Melrose school playground.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten

## Water treatment plant project set to begin

By Tom Shevlin

Improvements to the town's water treatment plant are set to begin early next month, according to Town Administrator Bruce Keiser.

The improvement project, which was part of a 2004 \$6.2 million water improvement bond issue, will feature state-of-the-art technology that is expected to operate at 99-percent efficiency. That means the town would lose only 1 percent of the water treated, as opposed to the 15 percent now lost during the treatment process.

The improvements are needed to ensure that the town complies with current water-quality regulations that the existing plant cannot meet.

Construction on the project is expected to take approximately 20 months and will be conducted by environmental engineers Weston and Sampson CMR Inc., of Peabody, Mass.

The North Reservoir was down 44 inches at last check, according to Keiser, who reported in place of Department of Public Works Director Steve Goslee. However, Keiser noted that Goslee, who was

away on town business, had based his report on observations taken prior to last week's rainfall.

Should the reservoir continue to drop in excess of 48 inches, the next level of the town's water restrictions will kick in. This includes a prohibition on all commercial and non-commercial car washing.

### Commission discusses permit process

In a round-about discussion focusing on what was described as a "merry-go-round" issue, town councilors debated how to best streamline the town's zoning and water permitting process.

Council President David Long who described the town's current permitting process as a "merry-go-round" said he wanted to give applicants a clear place to start the application process.

Just where to begin proved difficult for councilors. According to Keiser, Town Zoning Official Fred Brown had indicated that the process should start with water and sewer commission approval prior to moving on to the zoning board. Keiser said that per regulation, ap-

plicants must first secure access to water and sewer usage before zoning review can begin.

"To me, it should start at water and sewer," Keiser said.

Councilman Michael Schnack offered a different opinion. Schnack posed that anyone within the jurisdiction of the town water system technically has access to town water. Further, Schnack said that because the design process often undergoes changes due to zoning considerations, water and sewer commissioners could not be assured of the application's final water use.

"Until they go through the [zoning] process, how are we supposed to determine whether they can have approval?" Schnack asked.

Councilor DiGiando acknowledged both sides and expressed his desire to help reduce the consultative cost of development for island residents by streamlining the permit process, but suggested that the issue be tabled until more information could be presented.

Councilors agreed that the matter needed to be further discussed

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## Voters say 'aye' to island farm purchase

By Tom Shevlin

In a resounding victory for island conservationists, a standing room only crowd of 402 registered voters unanimously approved a plan on Tuesday to purchase the development rights of roughly 145 acres of historic island farmland.

The vote, which came during a special Financial Town Meeting (FTM) at the Lawn Avenue School, ensures that approximately 1,000 continuous acres of central island land will be preserved as farmland in perpetuity.

The \$9.75 million plan, put forth by the Conanicut Island Land Trust, combines federal, state, local, and private funding to purchase the development rights from the Dutra and Neale families on their respective farms.

The town, which had approved \$3 million for the program at its annual budgetary FTM in June, asked voters to approve a bond

issue for just over half of that amount, or \$1.6 million plus an additional \$500,000 from the town's capital reserves for a total cost of \$2.1 million.

In addition to town funding, the plan relies on \$3.5 million from the federal Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program, \$800,000 from the Rhode Island Agricultural Land Preservation Commission, \$750,000 from the Champlin Foundation, \$418,000 from the Dutra and Neale families, and \$2.1 million from private donations.

According to the terms and conditions of the sale, 120 acres of the 145 total must be maintained as farm pasture in perpetuity. The remaining 24 acres will be reserved for farmstead and outbuilding use by the farm owners. In addition, the sale grants the right for the town and land trust to develop and

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## The Chamber is more than just a network

By Michaela Kennedy

The Jamestown Chamber of Commerce has kicked off its annual membership drive, and new members are already knocking on the door. From meeting commercial needs to being a voice for the business community, the Chamber is a tremendous benefit for businesses, Chamber president Vicki de Angeli says.

With the town on the verge of adopting new zoning laws, de Angeli encourages businesses to be proactive and participate in Chamber activities. "It's important that business people have a unified voice. We all need to take the time to be involved," she said.

The business network started out as a village association, and has grown into the commercial success it is today. Tim Baker, former president of the Chamber, keeps in mind that most people here have small village values. Businesses are a part of the community, and they want to support of all the community. "Without any business, the village wouldn't be the same," Baker notes.

In addition, a big concern with local residents and businesses alike is affordable housing. "It's going to hurt my business if no one can afford to live here," Baker adds.

The chamber currently has about 135 members, but that number only represents a little over one-third of the business community, according to Donna Kohler, executive director for the Chamber. The membership continues to expand, however, since 95 percent or more renew their membership the following year.

The Chamber receives inquiries daily about relocating, visiting, commercial and other needs. "It's difficult to recommend people with a limited membership," Kohler admits.

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Donna Kohler and Vicki de Angeli