

# Planners approve garage conversion on Watson Avenue

By Michaela Kennedy

The Planning Commission unanimously approved recommendation of a request to expand activity from a residential to mixed use on a property on Watson Avenue. The commission continued the Sept. 19 meeting with old business, and heard an update on the downtown charrette project.

Applicant Christina Moorehead of Christina Originals proposed to convert a two-car garage into a studio. She described her hope to open a full service alteration shop, and to sell handbags in the commercial limited district.

After some discussion about parking limitations, the commission voted to accept the plan. According to a memo from the town planner, Moorehead noted she would move to a larger space in a more appropriate setting if the business grew beyond its parking capacity.

In old business, the commission continued review of a development plan on North Main Road to allow time for revisions to be added. Chairman Gary Girard reminded the board that the review was due to the construction being sited within the watershed.

Anthony Nenna of On-Site Engineering gave an overview of the revised plan, which included swales to direct water away from the proposed house. The existing 3-bedroom house, located within the watershed, is serviced by a cesspool. Applicant Patricia Oumette proposed a new house and individual sewage disposal system, since the well is not drinkable, according to Nenna. He admitted that the ISDS had not yet been approved by the state's Department of Environmental Management.

Commissioner Richard Ventrone questioned whether the ISDS awaiting approval was "the most up-to date." He also showed doubt that DEM would give consideration to the reservoir 100 feet away. The applicant assured the board that all standards were met.

In an update of the downtown charrette, Town Planner Lisa Bryer announced that white sandwich boards announcing the workshop series are up about town. She noted that the consultant team is preparing for the charrette by going over comments from the connector meeting of the previous week.

Bryer confirmed the duties of the consultants with the commis-

sion. "They are responsible for only a part of a very detailed scope of work, focused on downtown," she said. Bryer added that e-mails have been streaming in from people who want to be involved. She urged all to check the schedule online at [www.jamestownvision.org](http://www.jamestownvision.org) for times of stakeholder meetings.

Bryer said the consultants would be responsible for using form-based zoning for the downtown districts. She also asked them to look at affordable housing. "That will hopefully cover the entire island," she said.

Commissioner Jean Brown reported on the chamber meeting held to discuss the charrette project. She noted that chamber members hoped the outcome would produce changes that will simplify their process and make the development process more straight forward.

"This could be a trick, it could get more complicated," Brown echoed some of the comments.

Girard urged Brown to use the opportunity to talk about the charrette and encourage people to attend the events.

Bryer reported that e-mails have arrived from people who cannot attend any of the events but want to voice their opinions.

Commissioner Betty Hubbard suggested addressing references to mixed use in a more direct manner. "We don't have a problem with mixed use, so we need to inform the consultants that we are not against mixed use, and it needs to be changed in the ordinance," she said.

In other business, the commission:

Granted a continuance of a subdivision preliminary plan review on Luther Street for applicant Evelyn Furtado.

Accepted a copy of a memorandum from the town planner to the zoning board. Bryer noted that submitted revisions to a development plan for Beth Smith were accepted administratively and require no further review from the Planning Commission.

Put off a decision to appoint a harbor commission liaison. The position is currently vacant.

## Where in the world is the Press?



Steve and Marcia Wirth and Bob and Audrey Wilkinson met up in Yellowstone National Park in June, where they shared their campground with one of the park's resident bison.



Dana, Michael, Durga, and Talley Larkin went kayaking on Chilkoot Lake in Alaska this summer. The Larkins were on a coastal cruise of Alaska with Durga's family in celebration of her parents' 50th wedding anniversary.

## Town finds boat breakdown a result of product deficiency

By Tom Shevlin

After extensive testing by University of Rhode Island professor of chemical engineering Otto Gregory, Town Administrator Bruce Keiser reported on Monday that no known source of electrical charge could be found at East Ferry to substantiate claims by the boat manufacturer that electrolysis in the water caused the town's harbormaster boat to be pulled from duty.

"It's not water related," Keiser said. "It's product related"

After less than four months of

## Talk set for junior class parents

There will be an important informational meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 3 at 7 p.m. in the North Kingstown High School Auditorium to discuss the e-Portfolio graduation requirements, including the required portfolio presentation for the Class of 2009. An overview of the program and an update of student progress will be presented by the e-Portfolio Coordinator followed by a question and answer session. Parents are asked to plan to attend this very important meeting. Students are also welcome.

service, the boat was hauled out of the water for what harbor authorities assumed was routine maintenance. However, after the boat was hauled, several major deficiencies were identified and the boat was deemed unfit for service.

Damage to the boat, which included an absence of anti-fouling paint from the hull, a failure in the glue which attached the gunnels to the hull, and signs of corrosion found in various spots around the boat, led to a review process by the manufacturer to determine the cause of the flaws.

Ribcraft had asserted that high levels of electrolysis in the water at East Ferry had caused the corrosion, thus precluding any warranty claims, however harbor officials were skeptical. After commissioning Gregory to conduct his own studies, town officials are firm in their decision to question Ribcraft's assertions.

The town has sent a letter to the boat manufacturer, Ribcraft, of Marblehead, Mass., reporting its findings and seeking redress under the manufacturer warrantee.

Should the matter be protracted, Town Solicitor Peter Ruggiero indicated that the town was prepared to seek appropriate legal remedy.

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