

Councilman David Long stepping aside on a good note

By Tom Shevlin

In politics, like show business, timing is everything. Perhaps no one understands that better than current Town Council President — and former musician and stand-up comic — David Long. Long, who has served on the town council for four terms, recently announced that he would not be seeking reelection in November.

The timing, according to Long, was right.

With eight years of service under his belt, Long is Jamestown's senior council member and his departure comes in concert with the resolution of several drawn-out projects that had occupied years of debate and controversy.

That is fitting for Long, who was known for checking his easy

wit in favor of a strict business approach while presiding over council meetings.

Long summed up his style and tenure as council president in distinctly show business terms. "Don't let the crowd distract you," he explained. It would seem that Long, who as councilor and then council president navigated perpetually controversial waters, lived by his own words.

From the ongoing controversy surrounding the site of the town's highway barn to major improvements to the island's water infrastructure and several administrative changes, Long's eight years have been peppered with controversial issues and bubbling topics for water cooler conversations.

While controversy has stymied some issues, at the same time, the island has also realized significant improvements while Long served on the council.

Issues such as improvements to the town's water infrastructure, the location of the town's proposed highway barn, the construction of a new town hall, and the upcoming move to preserve Jamestown's open space have all been tackled

during Long's tenure.

"When I was first elected, water was the main issue," Long said. "People would come to council meetings extremely upset because they didn't have any water." Today, that issue has been resolved through a series of improvements to the town's water infrastructure, and Jamestown has been recognized as a statewide leader in water conservation.

Another issue that Long lived with through its resolution was the site selection for the town's highway barn, which he described as "an ongoing elusive goal for the last eight years."

"It's time to leave that pain and division behind," Long said about the barn issue.

Long, who had supported Lot 47 in the past, changed his vote in favor of upper Taylor Point. The selection, which was placed before voters and approved last month was a culminating issue for the current council and an important step forward for the town according to Long.

However, he also acknowledged that there have been a fair number of disappointments along

the way as well.

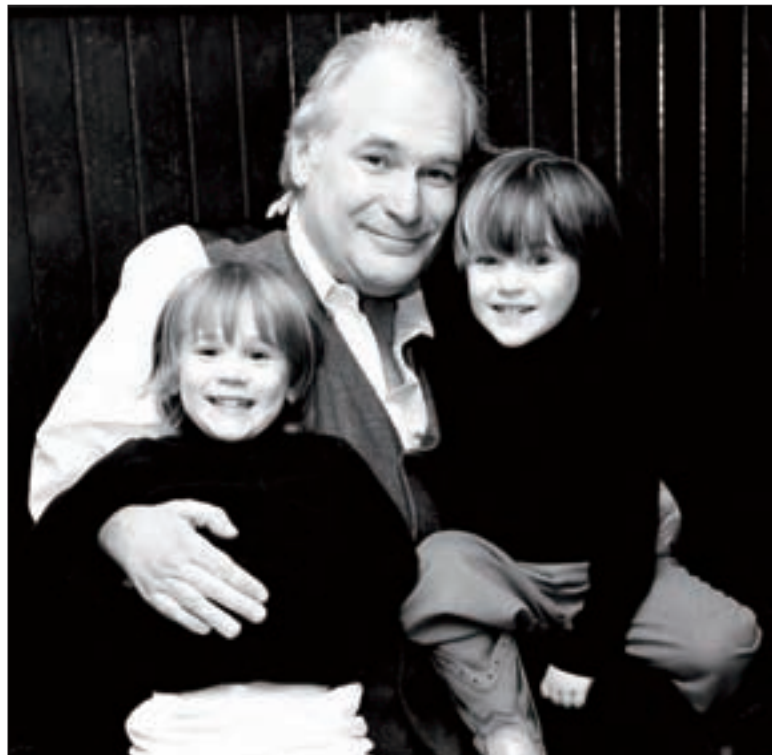
Chief among them was the failure of the town to secure a North Kingstown-Jamestown power cable, which would have ensured the island's power supply from both sides of the bay.

Long, who requires a breathing machine at night, stressed the seriousness of failing to ensure a reliable power source in the event that the island lose power as it did in June 2000 when a cruise ship mishap cost the island its electricity for several days. "That's forever now," Long said. "It was a sad day for Jamestown when we weren't able to secure that power line."

Still, Long is proud of his service and optimistic about the island's future.

Paraphrasing fellow councilman Bill Kelly, Long said that whenever you vote on something you make a permanent enemy and a temporary friend. After eight years, David Long has made cast many votes and made many decisions.

"In the end," Long said "you have to make decisions based on what's right."



David Long with his twin daughters

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