

Island Opinion

• EDITORIAL •

Village vision takes shape next week

A group of planners, designers and architects have been busy these past few weeks asking Jamestowners what we think about the island's village. Our opinions about what we love and hate about the downtown will become the foundation for the design charrette scheduled to take place next week.

Most of us live in Jamestown because of its location and character. We cherish the rural bayside. Our village is eclectic — some might even call it funky. And that is part of its charm.

Yes, the village does have its problems. There is a perception that parking is our worst headache, yet vehicular congestion is usually only found on weekends in July and August. The rest of the year there is plenty of parking.

Our principal challenge in the village is its ability to foster business. The downtown is Jamestown's only commercial district and should act as an incubator for businesses that not only serve islanders, but also employ those who live here. A business-positive environment is the most critical aspect of a healthy downtown.

Determining what works and what doesn't in the village is necessary as we plan for the future. This ongoing collaborative will hopefully yield a vision for the village that will guide the island's planning and zoning in the years ahead. The week-long charrette starts on Monday. Those who participate can watch as the village vision evolves. The final product will be unveiled on Friday evening.

It is important that islanders take the time to share their views on the future of our village. The character and functionality of our village some 10- to 20- years from now could well be determined by the design process next week.

Details about the design charrette can be found in this issue of the Jamestown Press. You can also find more information online at JamestownVision.org.

— Jeff McDonough

Write to us

LETTERS: Send your letters to: Editor, The Jamestown Press, 42 Narragansett Ave., Jamestown RI 02835. Our fax number is (401) 423-1661.

Our e-mail address is news@jamestownpress.com. Please include your name, address, and a daytime telephone number for verification. Anonymous letters will not be considered for publication. All letters must be limited to 700 words or less.



Plan for our childrens activities

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to Pem Attaway's letter to the editor in last week's Press about the planning session for the future of our town that took place two weeks ago. Mr. Attaway points out the very upsetting issue about the lack of representation of "the young people whose future town is being planned." The reason for that lack of attendance of young families is that the planning session happened to be on the same night, and exactly at the same time, as the Melrose Avenue School open house. When forced to make a choice, most parents chose their children's education first.

• LETTERS •

Had I known about the planning session earlier, I would have called and warned the meeting planners of this conflict, but I had seen no notice about the session until that very same day in the Press. I did email them the next day to complain about the timing of the session, and to give my opinions, but I have yet to hear back from anyone.

The underlying problem here is that Jamestown has evolved into a very difficult place to raise a family. We hold open planning sessions to talk about street lighting, sidewalks and building aesthetics, but our baseball fields are in shambles despite the efforts of many

hard workers. Our school department cannot seem to maintain teachers or administrators, which is having a profound effect on the continuity of the education of our students. Our school enrollment is continually declining, forcing the reorganization of our teaching staff every year (where are people going?). Our teen center had to be run out of the back of a van for almost a year and our town beach offers no amenities for anyone, much less families.

My family loves Jamestown and our kids would never hear of living anywhere else. But when you compare Jamestown with other neighboring commu-

nities such as South Kingstown, North Kingstown and even Newport, the opportunities for our children are very limited and never vary. We are intrigued by the thought of a new bike path which seems to be in the works, but where are the arts programs, and other non-competitive activities? Where are the game nights and movie nights? Where are the social events and family learning opportunities?

I thank Mr. Attaway for his commitment to this planning process and for his concern for families like mine. I encourage everyone to continue planning for the future of Jamestown and hope that all residents, both

Letters continued on page 7

The news of 10 and 15 years ago is from the Jamestown Press. The news of 100 years ago came from the collection of the Newport Historical Society.

100 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, October 9, 1907

A white frost was seen this morning on some of the lowlands on the island.

The four-masted barge Kennebec is anchored off the east shore awaiting a tow to Boston.

A new rudder has been built for ferryboat Beaver Tail and is to be hung today.

From the Newport Daily News, October 11, 1907

(advertisement) Cottage at Jamestown For Sale at \$600.

A nice 6-room cottage, within 10 minutes walk of ferry Landing. Lot contains 3,200 square feet of land. A good opportunity to secure a pleasant home at a very small figure. A. O'D. Taylor Real Estate Agent 132 Bellevue Ave.

From the Newport Daily News, October 12, 1907

Four more camps are to be built on the Peckham property at Beavertail this winter. Several were put up last year and proved popular.

75 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, October 7, 1932

Next Tuesday at the Thomas H. Clarke school, a choral club will be formed, and will be under the leadership of Carroll W. J. Ball, organist of St. John's church of Newport. This will be sponsored by the Jamestown school committee.

From the Newport Daily News, October 11, 1932

The first Home Demonstration meeting of the season will be held ... on Tuesday, October 13. All those attending will bring their lunch. "Remodelling hats and dresses" will be the subjects taken.

From the Newport Daily News, October 12, 1932

(The Pulaski Day program at the Thomas H. Clarke school is listed.)

This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden
Week of October 11

From the Newport Daily News, October 14, 1932

(The Town Council) voted to apply to the State for the remainder of the unemployment relief fund due the town.

50 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, October 9, 1957

Adult education classes in elementary and advanced typing will begin Oct. 15 in the Jamestown School ... If sufficient interest is evidenced by registration for additional subjects classes may be started provided a teacher is available. ... Assuming all obstacles can be met the (school) committee approved children of the third grade having instruction in violin playing as a nucleus for a school orchestra in later years.

From the Newport Daily News, October 14, 1957

(editorial) Although the Commerce Oil Corp. apparently has sunk a well into an unlimited supply of venture capital, the end of the fast tax write-off granted by the federal government should be a sign that highly-placed observers are not at all convinced by the necessity for an oil refinery in Jamestown.

25 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, October 12, 1982

(photo caption) Annual Columbus Day bicycle race, sponsored by Jamestown Rotary Club, drew 63 bikers for 22-mile trip 'round island Monday.

From the Newport Daily News, October 14, 1982

Sen. John H. Chafee wants the federal government to give the state a small parcel of land at Beavertail Point for a nominal fee rather than sell it to a developer at fair market

value. The 6.8-acre site is surrounded by park land and is being offered for sale for \$100,000.

15 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, October 8, 1992

The new Jamestown Bridge, after years of construction delays, will officially open to traffic Oct. 19.

A coalition of environmental organizations was set today to file a lawsuit in Rhode Island federal court challenging the state's plan to build an upgraded highway across southern Rhode Island, which includes the island's new bridge-connector road.

Neighbors opposed to plans to build a ballfield on land at the intersection of Eldred Avenue and East Shore Road failed Monday to persuade the Town Council to consider other sites for the project.

10 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, October 9, 1997

State Department of Environmental Management officials met with town officials last week to discuss implementing a master plan for land use at Fort Wetherill. According to DEM's David Borden, assistant director of natural resources, both the state and the town approved the plan in 1991. It calls for relocating DEM's marine fisheries laboratory to the abandoned military buildings on state land at the Fort Wetherill boat basin, also creating an educational/interpretive center at the site.

Dozens of people got an opportunity to glimpse a piece of Jamestown history last Saturday as the Jamestown Historical Society had a tour of the circa 1690 Captain Thomas Paine house.

Remember Jamestown's most celebrated bird of 1997? Well, it turns out that the great tit, relative of our common titmouse, was not an accidental escapee from Great Britain after all, but rather a resident of a local aviary who managed to wiggle his way through the mesh of his cage.