

Bridge authority makes barn land sale official

By Dotti Farrington

The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority board voted 3-0, with two members absent, to approve a contract for sale of about 6,000 square feet of its Taylor Point property to the Town of Jamestown at its Nov. 7 meeting.

If the Town Council agrees to the terms, the sale will enable the town to construct a municipal highway garage near the Jamestown end of the Newport Bridge interchange. The town already owns several acres at Taylor Point, where it has been operating the municipal sewage treatment plant for several decades.

The town needs the 6,000 square foot piece of the authority's holdings for such practical needs as contours without ledge, drainage, access and visibility. It wants to put a 12,500 square foot barn at Taylor Point. Voters rejected a plan two years ago for a barn at another section of Taylor Point, but approved the latest location in August.

It was the second time the authority took a vote on the sale. They approved the property transfer in June, with conditions that displeased town officials. Among other concerns, the RITBA board wanted to have a strong role in the exterior design of the building. The town was willing to consider the authority's ideas, but reluctant to give the broad veto power asked for by bridge officials.

Administrators and lawyers for the authority and the town have been negotiating terms since the

town first asked to buy the parcel early in the year. Authority President David Darlington referred to the latest contract version as "a lot of compromise and give and take by both sides." Vice President Richard Eannarino said, "It's in their hands now. We've done all we can do. We've done just about everything they've asked." They reviewed such particulars as the town asking for the sale. Bridge officials specified they were not looking to sell any RITBA land but were willing to try to be cooperative. Bridge officials are asking the town to pay all direct costs of the transaction, including up to \$25,000 in legal fees.

Roof color, design

An example of compromise as discussed by the authority was the color of the roof for the barn. The town originally presented a draft plan with a red roof that the board said emphasized the barn location, instead of keeping it toned down, as everyone agreed was a goal. The latest design shows the roof as a green color.

Not specified in the design talks was a suggestion by the town Conservation Commission that wants the roof to be environmentally green, a growing concept reflecting ecological and practical considerations, not only visible appearance.

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser told commissioners in September that he would research costs and options for such a construction feature. Bridge officials did not discuss that aspect this month.

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