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Affordable apartments plan gets nod from council

By Dotti Farrington

The Town Council last week endorsed a recommendation by Town Planner Lisa Bryer and the town's Affordable Housing Committee to develop town-owned property at 44 Southwest Ave. into at least 12 units of affordable rental apartments.

The effort was defined as a \$2 million project, with some funding coming from state and federal sources.

The location was called "almost ideal" and "terrific" in terms of its convenience to municipal and commercial services. Two potential drawbacks – finding Native American artifacts and existing wetlands on the site – were described at the council session. as "surmountable concerns."

Town employees and councilors expressed enthusiasm for reports of progress being made in achieving the housing. The town has less than

half of the number of affordable housing units that the state deems necessary for the town. Town plans call for at least eight new units of affordable housing in each of the next five years.

The town also is working with at least two for-profit contractors for their possible development of affordable housing on the island.

Water-users equity

Bryer announced at the Jan. 22 meeting she had received an estimated value of the property, which is owned by the town water department. Transfer of property ownership to an affordable housing operation would result in the full equity going to municipal water customers to offset expenses incurred by upgrading the municipal water system.

Brigid Ryan of Church Commu-

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Cell phone antenna gets okay from zoning board

By Sam Bari

The application for a special-use permit by Omnipoint Communications, Inc. was unanimously approved at the Jan. 23 meeting of the Zoning Board of Review.

Omnipoint, a wholly owned subsidiary of T-Mobile, USA, Inc., applied for a special-use permit to install a wireless communications facility on town-owned property at 96 Howland Ave. The application included dimensional variances to exceed the height limitation by placing an antenna on a water

tower located on the parcel, and a 5.9-foot backyard setback required to install radio equipment in a 15-by-15-foot leased area.

The comprehensive presentation to the board was made by attorney Brian S. Grossman of Prince, Lobel, Glovsky & Tye of Boston, Mass., assisted by Elijah Luutu, the engineer who designed the facility.

Omnipoint agreed to surround the leased area with a wooden

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Ice rescue practice at night

Jamestown firefighters are ready if someone falls through the ice covering one of the many island ponds. Above, firefighter Dan Page uses a water sled to rescue fellow firefighter Gary Largess during last week's Thursday night drill. At left, Largess dons a survival suit prior to taking the icy plunge.

Photos by Andrea von Hohenleiten

New programs offer after-school learning excitement for island students

By Michaela Kennedy

Now in its third year, the after-school enrichment programming at the Jamestown schools has experienced booming success. From foreign language to the Roger Williams Zoomobile, students at both Melrose and Lawn Avenue schools have a wide choice of fun offerings that expand with each series of sessions in the fall, winter, and spring.

During a visit to this winter session, the halls echoed with young voices involved in new crafts such as poetry, dancing, Scrabble, and herb blending.

Assistant Principal Mike Franco noted that "well over 100 kids" have signed up this January for the winter program at each school. "Karate is always big," he said. Over 40 students signed up, so they offer it twice a week, Franco added.

Walking by a group of students



Students Julia Hirsch and Travis Early try their theatrical skills in the after-school Improvisational Acting class taught by Lis Swain. Photo by Mary Hall Keen

with their eyes on a big screen in the darkened cafeteria, Franco explained how the middle school children have group discussions about short films. "Pretty high level stuff for these young kids, eh?"

he said, smiling.

Franco pointed out that interscholastic sports – basketball in the winter and track and field in the spring, for both boys and girls were high on the popularity list.

The post-class programs have grown through suggestions made by parents, teachers, and supporting neighbors. Principal Kathleen Almanzor said about the "amazingly neat offerings" of enrichment. "The Jamestown Education Fund and the people here have put a lot of work into making this happen," she said.

"Mary Keen was instrumental in helping us find money to run the programs," Almanzor said about the chairwoman of the JEF. Almanzor noted that the Rhode Island Foundation awarded the schools \$1,000 this past year to help fund the effort as well.

Keen threw the compliment back to Almanzor, praising her coordination of the ongoing series. "We're trying to step in and fill a need," Keen said about the foundation. She wrote a grant proposal for a three-year enrichment series. "The best thing about the

whole endowment is that it has made valuable programs available to everyone for free, emphasized Keen. "Everyone should be taking advantage of this," she added.

Almanzor also expressed gratitude to Sally Schott, chairwoman of the School Improvement Team at Melrose school. "She contacted Roger Williams, and put in a proposal to the Jamestown Education Foundation, which is sponsoring it (the Zoomobile)," she said.

At the Student Council meeting down the hall, more than 14 students gathered to design decorations for the upcoming after school social. "You make things happen," said Carla Aveledo about the Student Council. Other executive board members, mostly eighth graders, also stepped forward to explain how the club worked.

"Our purpose is to hold after school events," said Hayden

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