

Island Opinion

• EDITORIAL •

Accessory apartments could help make island housing affordable

There's no question that the value of real estate in Jamestown has skyrocketed over the past few years, especially since the island became a hot market for second home buyers. Unless you already own a home in Jamestown, the average middle class person can no longer live here because housing is no longer affordable. That means our children and senior citizens are moving elsewhere.

Many New England towns are struggling with the same problem. They want to provide housing that is affordable without creating vast apartment complexes that would destroy local aesthetics. Communities are finding that accessory apartments offer a sensible, affordable strategy.

In 1995 the Jamestown Town Council voted to ban accessory apartments from the island. The debate over accessory apartments was long and contentious. People feared that allowing accessory apartments would forever change the character of the island and depress local real estate prices.

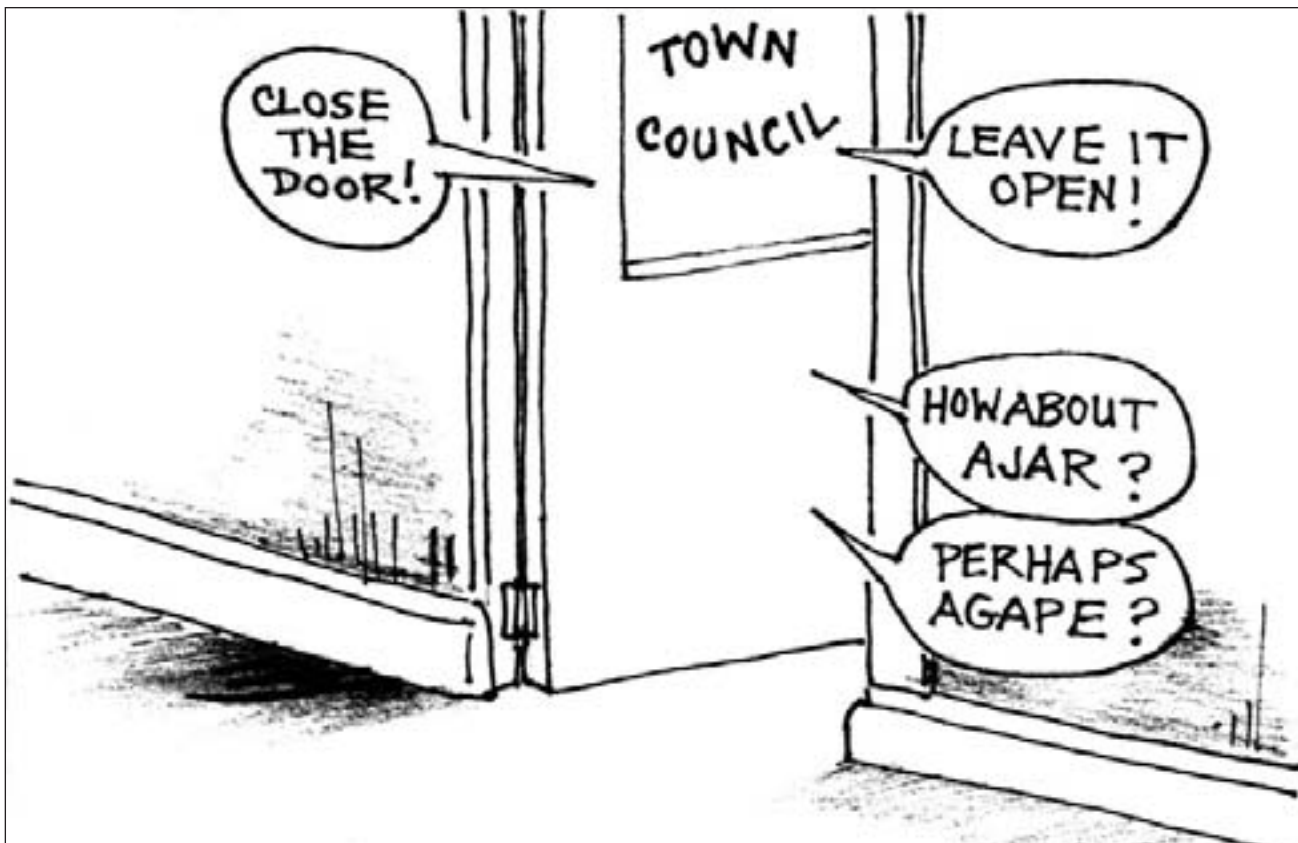
Twelve years later those arguments don't seem so weighty. The time has come to consider allowing accessory apartments in Jamestown as a way to create housing that is affordable. An accessory apartment is a self-contained second living unit that is attached to a single family dwelling. An accessory apartment may also be a cottage or guest house or a converted garage or barn. It has its own kitchen, bathroom, and private entrance.

Let's not confuse "affordable housing" with housing that is affordable. The affordable housing designation carries endless rules and regulations to meet federal and state guidelines. That only complicates the issue.

Instead, our goal should be to create housing options that would preserve the diversity and stability of our island neighborhoods. We need housing that will allow young adults who were raised here to continue living here. We also need housing that will permit our senior citizens to remain on the island after they sell their homes.

The debate over accessory apartments should be renewed. If we do the proper research and structure our zoning ordinance correctly we can allow accessory apartments that will provide a reasonable approach to creating island housing that is affordable.

— Jeff McDonough



Tower's microwave level within limits

I find it hard to believe that yet another Chicken Little "the sky is falling" scenario abounds in Jamestown. I thought the RF radiation controversy was left behind with the microwave oven and cell phone user brain damage scares. Yet, Reenie Rubino's letter to the Jamestown Press on March 22 regarding RF radiation, states the entire village is at risk with installation of another cell phone antenna on top of the water tower.

Without going into a dissertation about FCC mandated power density limits of RF exposure to the general public by different types of radio transmitters, it should be known that this controversy has been going

• LETTERS •

on since microwave technology was first advanced during World War II. Literally billions of people worldwide have been exposed to radiated microwaves in one form or another. Relatively minuscule numbers have been injured by exposure. In my 35 years of designing, installing and testing very high-powered military radar systems, I know of only two cases where injury occurred. One was because a 1 megawatt pulsed radar pencil beam was accidentally turned on two feet from the face of a technician. The other was an RF burn on a fingertip.

I do not advocate that RF energy is safe, however to elevate the "alarm level" be-

cause of cell phone antenna installations on top of a water tower, is both technically improbable and morally irresponsible. Worse case scenarios postulated by the FCC for cell phone transmitter antenna exposure levels do not even exceed 1 percent of the maximum decreed safe level by the FCC. Study after study by the IEEE (the U.S. Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) and countless organizations and agencies have established emission standards to protect the public to which all telecommunication companies comply.

A 300 to 500 watt ERP omni directional 900 or 1900 MHz cell phone signal is well dissipated to micro-

watts in its near field zone and even when reflected by other metal objects, falls magnitudes below the FCC microwatts (not milliwatts) per square centimeter level deemed safe by the FCC.

If Ms. Rubino is concerned about being "zapped" by RF devices, she should stay away from using her own cell phone, multi megawatt TV antennas, and the more concentrated higher RF levels by other type of emitters such as vessels transiting the shores of Jamestown who's rotating focused radar beams emit pulsed microwave energy 100,000 times higher than cell phone antennas. For the rest of us, we have other real threats to worry about and not the cry of "fire" inside a theater.

Letters continued on page 8.

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

100 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, March 28, 1907

The fishermen are setting their traps in the west bay, to be in readiness for the first run of scup next month.

The farmers on the island have commenced their early plowing for potatoes and some have already planted their first peas.

From the Newport Daily News, April 1, 1907

Much speculation is rife as to the final outcome of the bids recently submitted to the quartermaster at Fort Greble for ferry service between this place, Saunderstown and Dutch Island. Two bids were submitted, one by the Jamestown & Newport Ferry Company and the other by Captain Stillman Saunders. These were opened last week at the fort and forwarded to Washington for the final decision. The bids rendered were \$30 per day by the Ferry company for a year-round ferry service between Jamestown, Saunderstown, Dutch Island and Newport, and \$25 by Saunders for the same service.

75 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, March 30, 1932

Jamestown voters are looking forward to two events of particular interest within the next two weeks. April 6 the annual election will take place, and as each party has a full ticket in the field and is campaigning vigorously, a large vote is expected. April 9 the annual financial town meeting will be held.

From the Newport Daily News, March 31, 1932

(At the town council meeting), it was voted that the town treasurer be instructed to hire the sum of \$9,000 for a period of six months, and the sum be used to pay the current expenses of the town.



This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden
Week of March 29

(At the meeting of the school committee it was) voted to purchase a set of pictures advertised by the National Geographic society. It is the desire of the school board that teachers desiring to be reelected, shall file a letter to that effect before the next regular meeting of the board.

50 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, March 28, 1957

As the Navy in Washington was restating its grave concern over the proposed Jamestown oil refinery, Jamestowners were told last night that the target date for construction to start is May 1.

From the Newport Daily News, March 29, 1957

April 3-6 has been designated as Clean Up Week in Jamestown by the Town Council. (A schedule is given as to when town trucks would pick up rubbish if left on the sidewalk.)

25 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, March 26, 1982

Some people collect fine china, silver, handsome furniture and other fine collectibles. But one Jamestown man's collectible is the first oil burning furnace ever installed on the island in 1925. He is Alfred Vieira. Dr. Henry C. Ecroyd, the town's only doctor in that era, heard of an oil burning furnace and decided that was for him. Often out on emergencies late at night, he would come home to a freezing, cold house. He was faced with building a new coal fire

in his furnace — no job for a tired doctor! The doctor contacted the late Arthur S. Clarke Sr., owner of a local plumbing and heating business. But the problem was, nobody on the island knew how to install this "newfangled" furnace. So Clarke went to Philadelphia to study for six days at the Sword and Kimber Co., manufacturers of the oil burner, to learn about this unfamiliar type furnace. According to Frank E. Hull, who years later purchased the business, Clarke went to Providence for a day to learn how to install this furnace. He recalled fuel in 1925 was seven cents a gallon.

15 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, March 26, 1992

The Town Council Monday night voted unanimously to appoint Sharon J. McNamee, a former member of the U.S. Coast Guard, Jamestown's new harbormaster.

A Narragansett Avenue landmark will soon receive a much needed facelift. The old Baker Pharmacy building at 19 Narragansett Ave., which has been vacant for nearly five years, has been purchased.

10 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, March 28, 1997

Golf course operator Joseph Mistowski will now be paying the town more than \$80,000 a year.

The Town Council Monday voted unanimously to enter into a new three-year lease with Mistowski, who has operated the links since the town bought the course in 1986.

Dr. Frances Gallo, in her superintendent's report, gave a brief outline of a new strategic plan that will affect the education of every child in town. Gallo said the plan has been worked on a cooperatively by herself along with input from all faculty members. The plan will be a "dynamic and constantly moving form" that will be "value based" and strives toward "continuous improvement."