

Island Opinion

• EDITORIAL •

Let the voters decide where to put the barn

We've been arguing about where to build a new highway garage for an eternity. The debate over location and funding has relegated the town's public works employees to a dilapidated facility that most would consider less than tolerable.

We now have two potential highway garage sites.

The first is a hotly contested north end location. Residents on the north end have been opposed to a highway garage anywhere near the former town landfill for years. A lawsuit against the town has been promised if the north end site is selected.

The second option is adjacent to the Newport Pell Bridge. Most of the land needed is already owned by the town. However, the town will have to ask the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority for permission to use a small section of the bridge property.

Both locations have their assets and liabilities. It would take more space than we have here to detail them.

So, the next logical step is for the Town Council to make a decision. In a perfect world, the council would choose where to build the barn and move ahead with the construction. In fact, a previous council tried to do just that and failed.

An alternative is for the council to forward the decision to the public. Allow the island voters to have their say. Since the site selection has such a volatile history, it would seem prudent for the council to place the question on a referendum. Provide the voters with all the information on the two sites and have them cast their ballots. End of discussion.

Jamestowners will go to the polls this November to choose a new Town Council. There is a real danger that the November election could revolve around a single issue if action is not taken soon.

Island voters should make the decision this summer on where to build a new highway barn. Let's end the highway barn debate with a referendum before October. That way all of the other equally important town issues won't be lost in the campaign rhetoric over the barn that will surely surface.

— Jeff McDonough



Thanks for the raptor project help

On behalf of the Conanicut Island Raptor Project, we would like to thank several people for helping us install two new osprey nest poles on the island. Bill Munger and Doug Chapman from Conanicut Marine Services volunteered their time and crane to help us erect a new nest pole on the O'Farrell's farm off of Beavertail Road. Archie Clarke of Authur S. Clarke III Excavating volunteered his time and backhoe to help us install another new nest pole on the Petrie property in the Ft. Getty area. The generosity of these people and businesses made the installation of the

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approximately 500 pound, 25-foot-long poles and nest platforms go quickly and easily. Thank you Bill, Doug and Archie!

We would also like to thank the O'Farrell and Petrie families for donating the funds to make these two new nest platforms possible. I am sure if the ospreys could talk they would thank everyone for their new homes.

**Chris Powell and
Betsy Gooding
Co-chairs**

Follow up on tree committee story

Where to start? In the March 29 Press report of

the Jamestown Tree Preservation and Protection Committee's meeting of March 20th, I was quoted as follows: "the tree inventory isn't going anywhere," and that I hadn't heard back from the school on my most recent message. I did say that and at the time it was correct. Obviously I had not made it clear enough that I was waiting for a further response from Mr. Kaczynski, the innovative and respected eighth grade science teacher. If anyone deserves "thanks" it is Mr. Kaczynski because he does respond and had been trying to get students involved. But his youngsters, he explained, are very

busy and in his response of Monday, the 26th, he even offered to try to find a way to work the inventory into his schedule. He and I set up a time to meet. All of this occurred before the report in the Press came out. I extend a public apology to Mr. Kaczynski for my insensitive statement, which may have led readers to draw other conclusions. I hope we can still work together.

Praise for Robert Morton-Ranney who manages to capture in his reports the essence and salient points covered in the Committee's meetings, clearly not an easy task. Please keep it up.

The Committee has a busy year ahead: Arbor Day 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, April 4, 1907

To anyone who has witnessed former elections of town officials, yesterday did not seem like a town meeting day. Usually an excited gathering lingers in and around the town hall, from the opening of the polls until the result is counted, and carriages are hustling to and fro after indifferent votes. Yesterday all this was lacking, as there was no opposition to the Republican nominees: in fact, only 49 voters of the 270 took the trouble to cast their ballot, 44 being the largest cast for any candidate. The polls remained open from 10 a.m. to 5:15 p.m.

From the Newport Daily News, April 5, 1907

The trawl fishermen are still catching cod in the East bay. They are also securing a few line flounders in their gear.

From the Newport Daily News, April 8, 1907

In spite of several important appropriations to be passed upon at Saturday's financial town meeting, little interest was shown by the voters and at no time during the day was there a large attendance. On the Conanicut Park wharf proposition 75 votes were cast (passed 65 to 10 and for \$4,000), and only 68 on the purchase of the Wharton interest to the right of way at Beavertail (passed 45 to 23 and for \$2,000). ... The afternoon session opened with the renting at auction of the seaweed privileges of the town beach. Alvin H. Peckham was the successful bidder, paying \$33 for the seas side (Mackerel Cove) and \$10 for the pond side (Sheffield Cove).

75 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, April 1, 1932

A. R. Commette of Newport is planning to open the Jamestown theatre the first of May.



This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden
Week of April 4

From the Newport Daily News, April 8, 1932

Robert Quarters has leased the restaurant in the Richardson block, formerly occupied by Messrs. Marley and Richard Richardson.

From the Newport Daily News, April 8, 1932

Ernest Paterson, who has been spending the past winter at Palm Beach, returned to Jamestown Wednesday.

There are quite a number of cases of measles on the island.

50 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, April 1, 1957

The Jamestown Library started its summer schedule today and will be open three days a week, Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from 1 to 5 p.m.

From the Newport Daily News, April 3, 1957

The government will send a \$10,412 check to the Jamestown School Committee to help meet current expenses of operating the town school system.

From the Newport Daily News, April 4, 1957

Paintings in pastel and drawings in crayons by grades 2 through 6 pupils of the Jomioka Primary School in Yokohama, Japan are on display in the library of the Jamestown Elementary School.

From the Newport Daily News, April 5, 1957

The Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce voted to endorse the proposed \$45,000,000 Jamestown oil refinery and the State Federation of Labor renewed its support.

25 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, April 1, 1982

Despite a slack real estate market, the Taylor Point condominiums are selling, developer Herbert L. Finley said in an interview Tuesday. Taylor Point is the Island's third condominium project but the first of entirely new construction. The other two condo projects are the four-unit Sea Chalet on Walcott Avenue and the Harborview on Conanicus Avenue. Both are conversions.

From the Newport Daily News, April 6, 1982

The Town Council voted on Monday to increase the sewer frontage tax from 10 to 15 cents per foot. This will mean an increase of about \$5 a year for the average home owner.

15 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, April 2, 1992

The Town Council may change its stance on the state's cross-island connector to include an intersection with a traffic light at North Road rather than an overpass.

A \$94,000 renovation project at the town recreation center has started and is scheduled for completion by June 15.

Town officials would like to build four athletic fields on eight acres of federally-owned land located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Eldred Avenue and North Road.

10 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, April 3, 1997

While Tuesday's "April Fool" storm gave kids a day off from school, the 5 inches of wet snow dropped by a huge nor'easter left the island unscathed.

Newport Electric Corporation installed nesting platforms atop utility poles on Jamestown and Prudence Island this month in an effort to provide nesting sites for the rare osprey.