

Letters

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Corrected history of lot 47

In reading Tom Shelvin's synopsis of the Highway Barn vote, I noticed two technical errors regarding the history of this issue. First, he mentioned that Lot 47 was "purchased by the town specifically for the purpose of constructing a public works facility." That is not true. Back in 1987, the meeting minutes from when that purchase was made states that the lot was purchased for the purpose of constructing a public works facility or providing a buffer between the landfill and abutting residential lots. Clearly, Lot 47 was purchased to serve one of two options under consideration at that time. Back then, there were no homes on Prospect Avenue, nor was it even a developed road. Today, there are three new beautiful homes there, which are all less than ten years old. If used for anything, now that this neighborhood is developed with residences, Lot 47 should be regarded more as a need for buffer between this beautiful new neighborhood and the old closed landfill. Second, the vote back in 2004 was not a vote to overwhelmingly reject Taylor Point as a site for the Highway Barn, as noted in the article in last week's paper. That vote

was merely a rejection of the budget amount for putting a Highway Barn at Taylor Point, not a rejection of the site as a location for the facility. Had the design for Taylor Point been refined to more reasonable and less expensive facility attributes that vote for approving the funding by the residents may have passed. The public deserves to know the true history on this topic.

**Dave Lussier
Middletown**

Workers deserve more credit

I realize the difficulty reporters face when covering the various town meetings. They must assimilate a great deal of detailed information, separate the important from the unimportant, and try and report this accurately. Mistakes are made, and I normally would overlook this.

However, the report on the June 19th Tree Preservation and Protection Committee meeting was unfair to Jamestown's Department of Public Works employees and, I feel, must be corrected.

Among their many duties, these town employees plant and maintain trees on the rights-of-ways and public lands in Jamestown. They do this in a highly professional manner. In fact, one employee is a licensed arborist.

This past spring they planted a total of 20 trees, purchased with Federal funds through a state

"America the Beautiful" grant. They have diligently maintained these trees and recently replanted a number that were received in poor condition from the nursery and were replaced at no cost to the town.

To survive trees need moisture. You can easily spot new trees on rights-of-way since each has a green water bag, known as a gator bag, these were attached by DPW employees and are designed to precisely water trees when there is no rain.

During the meeting a member raised a proper question: are the bags regularly being refilled. It is impossible to tell simply by looking since the bags deliver water directly to the tree roots in just a few hours. The member asking the question was asked to check with the DPW. He checked and as will be reported at the next meeting, has been assured that every tree in town is being watered on a regular schedule.

This is not "news." The DPW has been planting and maintaining trees in town for years. Their efforts are a principal reason why the town has been designated a "Tree City" every year for the past five years. That is news, but was largely overlooked. The article instead emphasized the fact that a "packet" of material about the award went to the town Council and not the Committee. That is a trivial matter. The packet consists mainly of stickers to update the Tree City road signs and literature for the public about the program.

What you should have reported was that only eleven towns and cities in Rhode Island achieved "Tree City" status this year and

Jamestown is the smallest Tree City town in the state, thanks to the efforts of the Jamestown DPW employees.

**James Rugh, Chairman
Tree Preservation and
Protection Committee**

Hunt benefit a huge success!

Thanks to so many generous Jamestowners and off islanders who made our day a huge success.

A delectable spread of food was provided by East Ferry Deli, L'Osteria, Trattoria Simpatico, the PAC Club, Chopmist Charlie's, Peeking Garden, Oyster Bar, Trisha's Tropi Grill, House of Pizza, Narragansett Café, Dan Capuano, and Dolores Calabrese. An abundance of raffle prizes and gift certificates were donated by local businesses and private citizens. It took awhile to raffle off more than eighty gifts. Garda, the RI Irish State Trooper band, added to the festivities and kept us pleasantly entertained. Thanks to Dan Alexander for allowing us to use his venue for our event. All in all it was one of the best events I've ever been involved in. We raised over \$5,000 to assist Phil Hunt in his journey to recovery. We live in one of the finest towns in Rhode Island if not in the whole United States. Thanks to everyone involved for being a Jamestown "Fun" Raiser.

**Pam Baserman
Benefit co-coordinator**

Vote

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Kelly argued that a catch basin could be built to provide the fire department with additional resources in the event of a fire in the north end.

Councilman Michael Schnack echoed Kelly's sentiments and added that the threat of lawsuits or the loss of popularity would not influence his decision. Schnack said that the reports he had seen by both the state and the town did not indicate that a highway barn facility at Lot 47 would be a threat to residents' wells or the town's water supply. In fact, citing residential activities such as boat washing and chemical-laden lawn and garden maintenance, Schnack argued that "the biggest threat to our wells" is homeowners themselves.

"I've looked at both sides; I've visited both sides" Schnack said "I believe that the best location is at Lot 47."

Council Vice President Julio DiGiando, who had been an opponent of the 2004 plan to site the highway barn at lower Taylor Point, disagreed. In a decision that he said was based on three factors: locating the barn where it can't be seen, where it won't impact the neighborhood, and where there are no environmental concerns, DiGiando joined with Szepatowski in supporting the upper Taylor Point property.

"I couldn't support lower Taylor Point" DiGiando said, "but I can support upper Taylor Point."

With an evenly divided vote, Council President David Long, also an opponent of the 2004 Taylor Point plan said his position was well known. "I have always been a supporter of Lot 47," he said. "However...we have a site on upper Taylor Point that will work."

With that, Long cast his support for locating the highway barn facility at Taylor Point and urged voters to approve the referendum in order for the town to move on. "Every day we wait, the cost goes up" he said.

Visibly exacerbated by the years of contentious debate and inestimable delays, Long leveled blame for the project's hold up on "fear tactics" used by the North End Concerned Citizens. "The North End Concerned Citizens, in a mean-spirited way, played on people's fears...and I am angered by the hell they've put the town through all these years," he said. However, Long said that he had to put aside his personal feelings and "do what is responsible and right for the town."

Still, Long lamented the divisions the barn facility had created on the island and evoked one of the concerns expressed by north end residents in his remarks. "In a way, a toxic plume was released in the town."

Concluding, Long said that he hoped the town could now begin to move past the highway barn saga. "There's a whole lot more to life; a whole lot more to be done in Jamestown," he said.



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