

Island Opinion

• EDITORIAL •

Your help needed to Save the Farms

Whenever people are asked what they like most about Jamestown, the answer usually includes a comment about "rural character."

Of course, there are varied aspects to the ambience of Jamestown. There is the inspiring nature of the place. This is an island and we are surrounded by water. We've got rocky shorelines and several beaches. A big creek and salt marsh command the middle of the island.

We have an eclectic downtown, lighthouses, and a windmill. The island is the site of several parks for people to enjoy. And land has been set aside as a home for wildlife.

But it is the open space — the farmland — that really makes Conanicut Island unique. Where else can you see cows calmly grazing with a majestic landmark bridge in the background?

Only some of the farmland has been preserved, though. Several of the scenic Jamestown farms could be sold for development. Instead of looking at the vistas of cows and pastures, we could someday see houses and yet more houses.

That point is aptly illustrated by the signs in the shape of beef cows that currently line North Main Road. The signs are intended to draw attention to the Conanicut Island Land Trust's efforts to preserve the land of three Jamestown farms.

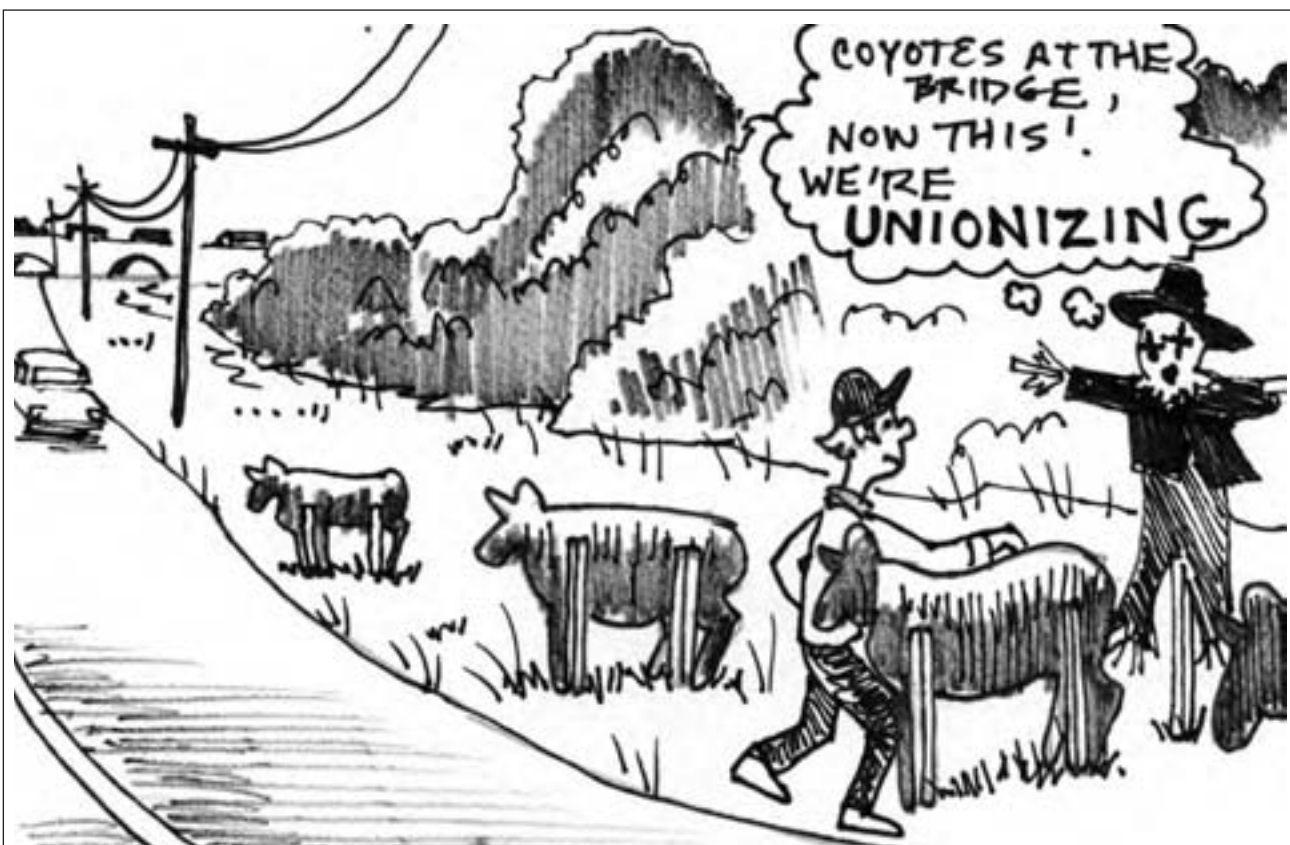
The Land Trust needs to raise \$4 million for its portion of an \$11 million deal that will keep the land as pasture and open space forever. The remainder of the money will come from a town bond issue as well as state and federal funds.

There's also a big deadline. The Land Trust needs to raise the money by Sept. 30.

If you'd like to learn more about the preservation effort, read the two advertisements from the Land Trust in this issue of the Press. Then imagine what those views along North Main Road would look like with houses there instead of cows.

And don't forget to see what the cows' signs say along the way.

— Jeff McDonough



Why was Taylor Point selected?

By Julio DiGiando

The residents of Jamestown will be asked to express their collective opinion regarding the siting of a new highway barn facility at upper Taylor Point later in August. It is again another crucial decision point in this long drawn out process. I believe it is incumbent on me, as an elected official, to share my perception regarding the propriety of this proposal.

As the Town Council liaison, I served with the neighborhood advisory committee as we worked through the details of the previous Taylor Point pro-

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posal. From that process, a number of issues became abundantly clear. If and where we site a highway barn, requires us to consider four major issues. These issues are intertwined with each other, and all must be equally respected. Our inability to meld these issues led to the defeat of the last proposal.

The site that our community chooses needs to be environmentally friendly, economically viable, esthetically pleasing, and operationally sound. None of these issues are greater than or lesser than any other. All must be equally respected.

Both the Town Council and town administration are proposing that the community support a bond that will not exceed \$1.5 million dollars. We are confident that we will be able to do the necessary site work, and construct a building for these dollars. This figure is not more than or less than any other proposal.

By locating the barn at Taylor Point, we will be able to consolidate all of our municipal operations at one site. There is room for our treatment plant, the barn, a modified salt shed, and if need be, a future expansion of the tank system associated with the treat-

ment plant. There is a distinct advantage in having these uses at the same locale. It is important to note that we will not have room for infinite amounts of material storage, but there will be room for our day-to-day needs. It may be better economy to only store what we need, be it sand, gravel, piping, or cold patch. Having a facility that would be served by public water and sewer is also a major operational advantage. There is no need for an expensive sewer pump, as gravity works in our favor. Nor do we need to be concerned with the drawing of well water effecting other neighbors' water supply.

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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, July 24, 1907

The largest number of cows ever up at auction on the island was offered for sale yesterday on the Seth Pierce place, near the West ferry, when of a herd of 64 over 40 were sold.

From the Newport Daily News, July 25, 1907

The Knowles wharf property at the foot of Narragansett Avenue was offered for sale at public auction today. This is one of the most valuable properties on the island, but owing to the lack of bidders it was bid on by a representative of the Knowles heirs.

75 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, July 22, 1932

Mrs. Willis E. Clarke, chairman of the Fresh Air Children committee of Jamestown, went to Kinston yesterday to meet the children coming from New York, arriving in Jamestown at 5 o'clock. The children were then placed (in the homes of the hosts). ... Mr. Commette, manager of the Palace Theatre, will issue passes during their stay in Jamestown.

From the Newport Daily News, July 26, 1932

Mr. P. H. Hazard made a motion (at a meeting of the Jamestown Historical Society) that the paper on "Old" Jamestown, written by Miss Mollie Carr and read at the previous meeting, be printed in the Newport Daily News.

From the Newport Daily News, July 28, 1932

The dance at the casino Wednesday was attended by a large number of the children of the summer colony, and was followed by games and refreshments of cake and ice cream. General dancing followed.

50 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, July 23, 1957



This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden
Week of July 26

A drenching rainfall of more than half an inch, the heaviest in Newport in more than two months, buffeted the area yesterday afternoon in a cloudburst that brought soaking relief to parched fields. ... In Jamestown, a lightning bolt entered the Southwest Avenue home of Mrs. Ann Hertel, struck the electric range, passed through a hole in the back of the stove, scorched a small area and left a burn mark the size of a half dollar on the wall behind the stove. The fire department was called but no other damage was discerned.

The Defense Department has rejected the Jamestown Council's request that the government relinquish some of its holdings in the town for public parks, recreational areas and tax purposes. ... The town had sought holdings at Fort Burnside and at Beavertail for park and recreational purposes. It further asked that Fort Wetherill be returned to the town for tax purposes.

From the Newport Daily News, July 24, 1957

Four Jamestown summer visitors were rescued this noon when their 12-foot "Pram" sailboat capsized about 1,500 feet from the east shore of the island. (They were pulled to safety by skiffs launched by the town fire department and two civilians.)

Jamestown's Mackerel Cove Beach was closed to bathing yesterday due to heavy pollution from raw sewage.

From the Newport Daily News, July 25, 1957

In an effort to obtain ancient maps that may show the location of treasure buried by the notorious Captain Kidd and his pirate crew, John L. Smith, chairman of the Jamestown Tercentenary Inc., yesterday sent a radiogram to an Englishwoman. ... Captain Kidd is reputed to have visited

Jamestown in the late 1600s as a guest of another noted pirate, Capt. Thomas Payne (sic) at "Cajacet."

Mackerel Cove Beach in Jamestown was reopened to the public yesterday afternoon. ... Two tides since the closing (for a second time), plus the effect of offshore winds, were sufficient to make the beach safe for swimming.

From the Newport Daily News, July 29, 1957

Jamestown is readying for the celebration of the town's 300th birthday anniversary. Attractive markers have been placed to designate many of the historical spots on the island.

25 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, July 27, 1982

The Town Council Monday night called for a resolution to endorse a freeze of the nuclear arms race.

15 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, July 24, 1992

(photo caption) Seamen stand ready to unfurl the square-rigged sails on the tall ship Esmerelda during the tall ships parade in East Passage Monday afternoon. However, Mother Nature did not cooperate with the event's planners. Shortly after Esmerelda set sail a thick fog caused the tall ships to vanish from the sight of land-bound spectators.

10 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, July 24, 1997

Refurbishing the town's sewage treatment plant to make it serviceable for another 20 years would cost \$3.3 million. Built in the late 70s, the mechanical and electrical components of the plant were designed to last for two decades. With that life span coming to a close, the town hired Vollmer Associates LLP of Boston to evaluate the plant.

Ft. Getty campers indulge in the beauty, relaxation, and friendships of this campground community year after year. Located in the bay's West passage, the campground offers 103 seasonal RV sites with about 80 full season campers.