

Teen

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high school senior, remembers the class project that set wheels turning for the center. In history class in 2003, a lesson called "Project Citizen" was taught to all eighth grade students. "Every class came up with problems in our community with different ways to solve them," Moreau explained. "One problem was boredom for middle school and high school kids. We went to the town and got support for the idea."

Moreau says the idea of having a teen center was big, and expresses satisfaction at having contributed to a cause that benefits future generations. "I'm really excited. I don't think it will do me much good since I'm leaving Jamestown and won't be a teen here much longer. But it will be great for the younger kids."

The young adults made people in the community aware of their need, but then a state institution drove home the point to the residents. "We've had amazing support from the Rhode Island Foundation," Minto notes. In 2004, members of the Conanicut Community Coalition wrote a grant to the R.I. Foundation, and in 2005, \$150,000 was awarded to the town through the Newport County Fund. "That's \$50,000 a year for three years to fund programming costs," Minto explains.

The teen center was then born in the town grange and senior center on West Street, soon after the eighth grade students presented their idea to the town. Charlotte Richardson, master of the Conanicut Grange and head of the Friends of the Jamestown Seniors, was instrumental in helping the youngsters, and Minto was hired as coordinator. "The seniors were amazingly generous in

letting us use their space for two years," Minto remembers. Regular teen hours were set, and kids gathered to talk about the events they wanted to do. They finally had the money and adult presence to run programs and events. "The foundation showed the town its (teen center) value, and now it's time for the town to pick it up," Minto adds.

The town has picked up responsibility in a variety of efforts so far. A space in the recreation center was offered rent-free. Refurbished computers from the school and the town will be set up in the center. The police department donated \$1,000 for a television.

Architect Ron DiMauro donated designs for the center's construction. Other supporters in the community stepped forward to offer helping hands. "The generosity of the community got us to this point," Minto says.

One of the first projects the teenagers have planned for the center is to design tiles with the names of donors who have supported the teen program. "Tiles for Teens" will be displayed as a mosaic mural on a wall of the space. "The fundraising project has raised \$4,000, and we are still expecting more tiles to be donated," Minto notes.

The youth club has drawn great support from neighboring Newport. Minto has already involved teen groups with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center, the Women's Resource Center, the Boys and Girls Club and Youth Pride Inc. "Involvement with other communities has made kids realize what other communities have to offer, and how lucky they are themselves for what they have," Minto says.

After stocking the center at East Ferry with video games, art supplies, computers and books,

Minto talks about the bones of the operation. Workshops, tutors, speakers and monthly dinners are a few of the ideas already in the works for the center. "The future of the center is dependent on adult volunteers," Minto says. "The possibilities are limitless."

The key to making a teen center work is to include the teenagers in every aspect of preparation. "You can't plan an activity without the kids," Minto advises. She smiles, remembering events she tried to plan but failed without input from the aspiring adults. "When they are involved, it's always a success."

Minto invites the whole community to stop by the new teen center on Friday night. For those who would like to offer funding support, tiles will be available to purchase for the "Tiles for Teens" fundraising project. Fill out the ad on page 17 and help the teen center get off to a great start.

Council

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chew gum and walk very well," DeLuca said.

Councilor Robert Sutton, who recently retired from RIDEM, volleyed back, "I can chew gum at the same time," and assured the group that any fishing pier at the Plum Point location would have to meet the same standards as the Verrazano bridge.

Kern and DeLuca want RIDOT officials to commit to building a pier that can withstand 150 mph winds and a 10-foot surge. However, by their own admission, the cost of constructing such a structure would be prohibitive and current plans that do not meet that standard fall short. "The state can't afford to spend \$5 million on a battering ram," DeLuca said.

After their presentation, the pier opponents encountered a battering ram of skepticism in the form of town councilors.

"I have to say gentlemen, your presentation smacks of 'not in my backyard,'" Councilor William Kelly said.

Councilor Barbara Szepatowski also shared her concerns. While she agreed that in light of the state's economic woes \$5 million

could "probably be better spent," she was skeptical of the pair's Katrina-invoking presentation.

"I worked on the Jamestown Bridge. I saw how deep the pilings went...I don't think it's a fair comparison," she said.

Reining in what was becoming a testy interaction, Council President Julio DiGiando explained that while neighbors, Jamestown and North Kingstown residents likely had different viewpoints on the issue. "We need to look at it from a Jamestown perspective," he said.

Walking trail discussed

While Plum Point fishing pier opponents seemed to run into a thicket of opposition, island conservationists began plotting a course that could lead them to the creation of a cross-island trail network.

Spurred by Sutton, councilors took up the issue of constructing a trail network that would extend from the north end to Weeden Lane and border along the Dutra and Neale farms to the west, ultimately connecting to established trails through the Conanicut Island Sanctuary.

Conservation Commission Chairman Chris Powell said that the trails project was an issue his group had been working on for several years. Sutton brought up

the issue after learning that the town had received a \$50,000 grant for the project that had yet to be used.

According to Powell, the project is similar to others the town has taken on in the past and could be a "community event." Many of the island's trails have been cleared by volunteers, including the sanctuary trail located next to the Jamestown golf course which is comprised of both natural paths and man-made boardwalks. A similarly comprised trail could also be constructed through the Great Creek and up to Weeden Lane. Powell asked that the Conservation Commission work with the town administrator and town planner to move the project along. Councilors agreed. Looking toward Town Administrator Bruce Keiser, Council President DiGiando nodded, "You're in charge."

Sole Source Aquifer

Councilors also voiced their thoughts regarding the island's designation as a Sole Source Aquifer in the run-up to an EPA meeting scheduled for last night.

Both Councilors Kelly and Sutton said they were leery of adding additional layers of bureaucracy that according to Sutton could make local governance "bogged down." Meanwhile, Kelly wondered what the upside was for island residents. Without the incentive of grants or federal funding opportunities, Kelly questioned the wisdom of "adding another layer" to an already regulated de-

velopment process.

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser said that although the town would appear to meet the criteria for SSA designation, he was unsure if it would ever have an impact on island life. According to Keiser, SSA designation is meant to protect a community's primary water source from major federal projects such as road and airport construction. Those types of projects are not likely on the island, Keiser said, and the designation does not apply to landfill remediation - a project which has been viewed by some to be at the heart of the designation effort.

Still, Keiser said that the designation could serve an educational role. That aspect is appealing to Councilor Barbara Szepatowski, who said the EPA designation could play a valuable public education role, while she also said she could foresee federal funds being allocated for SSA designated communities in the future.

Sutton disagreed. "I sense Jamestown is very much aware of the limitations of living on an island...and I can't get my head around what insight someone from Boston is going to bring to someone living in Jamestown."

Open Forum

In the open forum, Rep. Bruce Long (R-Jamestown, Middletown) provided a legislative update on several items of island interest including his on-going effort to reduce school busing costs. Long reported that he didn't foresee his

bill seeking to eliminate mandatory busing as a priority this session, however said he believed it was important to continue bringing the matter to the attention of assembly leaders. Currently, according to Long, Jamestown receives less in state education aid than it costs to transport school children off island.

Long also reiterated his opposition to the supplemental budget and pledged to vote against any reduction in state aid to the island.

Karen Krider, president of the Conanicut Island Art Association, rose to remind councilors of the tax incentives for artists associated with arts district legislation.

In other business, councilors:

- Accepted the resignation of Eric T. Lexow from the Jamestown Police Pension Committee.
- Discussed renewing efforts, in conjunction with Rep. Long to establish a Conanicut Island Arts District.
- Accepted a letter from Nancy Bennett expressing her appreciation for her appointment to the Planning Commission.



Letters

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fiel at the tax collector's office.

Will the council or any appointed member of a commission or a manager charged with the responsibility of overseeing the proper or improper use of town-owned land stand up for the taxpayers and get us adequate compensation, fair market value, for those lost lands and stop the fleecing of Jamestown?

I doubt it, for after all, the symbol of Jamestown is a sheep.

Frank Meyer
Jamestown



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