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Council debates cost of landfill closure

By Sam Bari

A letter from the state's Department of Environmental Management concerning the closing of the former Jamestown landfill inspired a discussion between the Town Council and Town Administrator Bruce Keiser at Monday's meeting.

The letter, from the Office of Waste Management at the DEM, said the DEM was in need of a status update since the last update was in June 2006, when the site was approved for erecting the highway garage.

Since the proposed highway garage is going to be located at Taylor Point, OWM requires that

proper closure of the landfill be completed. The town has 30 days from March 11 to respond to the request for a written update outlining the town's intentions with the site.

Keiser said he discussed the matter with Town Engineer Michael Gray, who has been in contact with GZA Geo Environmental, Inc., of Providence, the firm contracted to handle the closure. He said they had given an estimate of \$750,000 to complete the project.

Councilman Robert Sutton said that he thought three-quarter

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Island teens sound off about wind energy

By Erin Brennan

Conservation is an important matter, especially with high oil costs and energy prices going nowhere but up. But, the Jamestown Wind Committee is suggesting a way to cut the cost of energy for the local municipal buildings by installing wind turbines.

The turbines would be up to 300-feet high, and most likely be located at the south end of the island, according to members of the committee. Wind Committee member William "Bucky" Brennan said that Jamestown is a prime candidate for the turbines.

"We have good wind resource-

es," said Brennan. "We have a good average wind-speed, and we are a good applicant for the project because we rank high on the wind map." The wind map is a topographical map that shows wind-speed. The wind energy would be used to power the buildings such as Town Hall, the water treatment plant, police station, schools, etc. The remaining energy would be sold back to the electric company, which would essentially lower taxes.

"Alternative energy is the way to go," said islander Dan Page, a

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Easter Bonnet

Olivia Rogers, 4, above, found a better use for her Easter basket than collecting eggs at the Jamestown Women's Club annual egg hunt on Shoreby Hill Saturday morning.

River Jane Andersen, 2, right, carefully selected a piece of candy for her basket.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten



Council supports municipal salary increases

By Michaela Kennedy

Municipal department heads listened in on Monday night as the Town Council discussed their possible wage increases at the third fiscal budget workshop. The proposed 4.1-percent increase, some \$820,000, added to the general town budget is "just under the state limit," according to Town Administrator Bruce Keiser.

After an introductory review of budget increases since 2002, Keiser addressed "the elephant in the room," the municipal salaries. He showed salary levels for department managers in 15 communities around the state that were consistently higher than wages in Jamestown. "Our finance director's salary is dead last," he added.

An unidentified dark-haired woman interrupted the town ad-

ministrators with a question. The Town Council chairman asked her to wait until the end of the presentation for comments before she said, "You're comparing apples to bananas."

Keiser compared expenditures of town staffing and public works against other towns, stressing that these factors should be considered when deciding salaries, not just how many people are in the community. A community's level of urbanism can be measured in how much it spends on public works, he argued. As an example, Keiser pointed out that the island spends almost as much on public works as Narragansett, a much larger community in population and land size. "There's a difference between the levels of expertise of managing four thousand people on an island with limited resources as

opposed to spreading four thousand residents over a lot of land," he said. Comparable jobs in the private sector were much higher, he added.

Town Councilman Robert Sutton said he refused to argue about the proposed wage increases. "When you look at salary and salary adjustments, you must look at the people in those positions who are giving excellent service. For a number of years, the town has carried a surplus and that's very important."

"I look at how people are performing. If they are doing a good job, pay them. What's the big deal?" Sutton said.

Councilor Bill Kelly agreed with Sutton, saying, "We are looking at consistently below the mean. I would put a face on

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Twin charm

Twins Tyler, left, and Travis Atwood, of East Shore Road, took home three awards at the Fire and Ice International Dance Competition at Rhode Island College. The seven year olds competed as part of their hip hop team and individually to win the Platinum, Gold and Most Photogenic awards.