

# Runoff from high groundwater property still not resolved

By Michaela Kennedy

Applicant John Hayes returned to the Planning Commission for a third time with a proposed development plan to build a new house on Seaside Drive. The Planning Commission, at its April 2 meeting, agreed to continue review of the revised plan.

The site plan basically remained the same except for drainage system changes, Town Planner Lisa Bryer noted in a memo to the commission. She showed concern that "considerable fill" was proposed around the house, exceeding three feet at the lower end of the house. "The engineering on site has not mitigated off site impacts, particularly to Seaside Drive, to an acceptable degree," Bryer wrote.

Acting Planning Commission Chairman Barry Holland said that by putting the driveway and fill in, "you force water that used to flow on to the property onto the neighbor's property." He said that the engineering design solved the impervious roof layer runoff problem, but exacerbated the rest of the flow coming off the property onto someone else's property. "It doesn't look like you've taken care of the problem," he said.

Peter Brockmann, the attorney representing the applicant, asked if the fill were eliminated, would the board still have the same concerns? Holland replied he would have less concern if the drive wasn't sloped uphill.

John Braga, engineer for the project, said that the driveway would act as a dam. He voiced the opinion that water flowing off the

property onto Seaside every 15 years or so was a minor concern. "We've already captured water from a ten-year storm," he added.

Brockmann defended the revised plan, pointing out that Hayes brought in a team of professionals to address the high groundwater issues on a property that the owner "has a right to build on."

Some neighbors in the Jamestown Shores area stood up to object to the proposed construction. Susan Gorelick echoed sentiments aired in her petition to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, signed by neighbors in opposition to the project. The letter called for DEM to address impact of septic systems in the area as well as cumulative impact of increased density. "As you know, the state finally passed the law on cumulative impact for Jamestown several years ago. We need to see this law become effective immediately," the petition demanded.

In the town planner's report, Bryer said that Don Powers, a consultant for the downtown charrette held last fall, would conduct a special area study of the block between Green Lane and Clinton Avenue. The architect would seek input from property and business owners within the area as part of the study, and present a concept plan to the town, Bryer added.

In correspondence, the commission acknowledged a ruling from the Rhode Island Superior Court in favor of an appeal filed by John Perotti, owner of two adjacent lots on Ship Street, in response to a

denial of a special use permit that would allow the applicant to build a three-bedroom house on the lots. Holland asked the town planner to schedule an executive session for the commission as soon as possible to discuss details of the case. He encouraged all commissioners to "read the decision very carefully."

Also in correspondence, Commissioner Nancy Bennett wrote a two-page letter of concern to the planning department about the application of Village Hearth Bakery to expand to a 40-seat restaurant. Bennett referenced the town planner's suggestion of approaching the zoning board for some relief from the parking requirement. "On-street parking of this magnitude for this expansion concerns me greatly," she wrote.

In a tree committee liaison report, Commissioner Nancy Bennett said that five trees were scheduled to be planted in the cemetery at the four corners downtown in celebration of Arbor Day, a national celebration that encourages tree planting and care.

In other business, the committee:

- Unanimously approved the annual application for the Community Development Block Grant. A request for \$200,000 for housing development on Southwest Avenue made up the bulk of the total requisition of \$272,800.

- Continued the preliminary hearing for the proposed development plan for the Village Hearth Bakery expansion.



## Where in the World is the Jamestown Press?

Paul Andrews of Jamestown and his godson, Michael Gionis of New Jersey, took the Press to Sparta, Greece. Both men are of Spartan descent and they are seen here in front of a statue of King Leonidas.

## Website rates facilities for people with disabilities

A new Web site has been launched that will allow people with disabilities, their families, and friends to share first-hand information about handicapped-accessible restaurants, hotels, theaters, and other public places around New England. The free Web site, New England Handicap Access, can be found at [www.NEHandicapAccess.com](http://www.NEHandicapAccess.com).

Included in the site are profiles of a facility's general level of accessibility, availability of handicapped parking and restrooms, ease of mobility inside a facility, and other key indicators. It also includes links to other services and issues that impact accessibility.

As the database grows, it will include listings of restaurants, hotels, theaters, museums, parks, sports arenas, and stores for the cities and towns in each New England state. The site also offers a way to share one's own information about a place they have visited by sending an e-mail to [Access@NEHandicapAccess.com](mailto:Access@NEHandicapAccess.com).

## Safe driving in work zones encouraged

The week of April 7 to 11 is National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week. More than 1,000 fatalities occur in work zones across the United States each year, a number that has risen 45 percent in the past 10 years. Statistics show that 85 percent of those killed in work zone accidents are drivers or vehicle occupants. Additionally, more than 40,000 people nationwide are injured each year in work zone accidents.

RIDOT offers the following tips for safe driving in a work zone:

**Slow down:** Speeding is one of the major causes of work zone crashes. Read the signs: Signage and flashing arrows are used to guide you and other drivers to move safely through the work zone. Don't engage in distracting activities: Dedicate your full attention to the roadway and avoid changing radio stations or using a cell phone while driving in a work zone. Merge as soon as possible: Don't drive right up to the lane closure and then try merging in. Expect delays: Leave early so you can reach your destination on time.

**Be patient and stay calm:** Remember that work zones are not established to personally inconvenience you.

## Table settings on display at museum

A display of designer wedding tables will be on exhibit April 18 and 19 at the Newport Art Museum.

Table settings and décor from 12 area designers will be featured. An opening reception and champagne preview will be held Friday, April 18, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Griswold House. Tickets are \$25. Call 848-8200 to reserve.



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