

Council

Continued from page 1

Council President Julio DiGiando and councilman Robert Sutton were aware of the dangers to the fishery and the environment from exposure to the toxins. They were also aware of Newport's decision to change its mosquito abatement program to eliminate the use of toxic chemicals.

DiGiando and Sutton agreed that the town should not be using such invasive methods and DiGiando promised Heaney that the elimination of methoprene in the town mosquito abatement program would be an agenda item for the next council meeting on April 28.

In an unrelated matter, the council voted 3-0 to approve joining the Town of Burrillville and other Rhode Island municipalities in their opposition to House of Representatives Bill H-7448, an act relating to parks and recreational areas, and the limitations of liability during the public use of private lands. Council members Barbara Szepatowski and William Kelly were absent and did not vote on the matter.

The liability limitations in the bill would change the definition of "owner" to exclude the state and municipalities for the purposes of liability relating to public use of private lands.

Unfinished business

The council voted 3-0 to approve the deletion of language in proposed legislation concerning the Jamestown Arts District that would exempt artists from paying income tax on earnings from sales of artwork. The artists would, however, be exempt from charging sales tax.

Town Council sitting as Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Board

The council voted 3-0 to approve the application of Conanicut Marine Services for a class G liquor license for permission to serve alcoholic beverages on the ferries of the Jamestown and the MV Katherine while dockside for thirty minutes prior to departure and until departure.

Licenses and permits

The council approved by votes of 3-0 the renewal of holiday license applications for the Purple Door and the Peking Garden. The council also approved the transfer application of the Video Showcase to transfer the name to Varsha, Inc. dba: Video Showcase. The motion for approval also passed with a vote of 3-0.

The council approved a one-day peddler license application by the Humane Society of Jamestown with a vote of 3-0, as well as a Ft. Getty entertainment license application by the Chemical Company to have a band at the pavilion June 28 from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. The motion carried with a 3-0 vote.

School budget

In the open forum, Councilman Robert Sutton presented a two-page letter to the council as well as members of the school committee that addressed his concerns about the school budget.

Highlighting the significant points of the letter, Sutton said he believes his observations indicate "a school administrative structure that has not provided educational continuity, organizational responsiveness/accountability or financial efficiency and one that will be unable to respond to the inevitable reductions in available state and local financial resources. I also believe that the organizational changes being requested in this year's school budget are inconsistent with improving that organizational structure and inconsistent with a future where there may very well be a significantly reduced public financing capability."

He continued, "I believe that Jamestown School is one of Jamestown's true and timeless values, it is one of the most important ways we define our island community and it should be preserved."

But added, "In budget meetings, I have identified what I believe to be a better organizational direction, but I recognize that I do not understand or appreciate all the organizational administrative problems confronted by a local school organization."

Sutton listed the following as his concerns that he would like discussed by the town council and the school committee:

- School children populations at the Jamestown School decreased from 627 to 477 - a decrease of over 31 percent.
- Number of classroom school teachers decreased from approximately 47 to 38 - an estimated guess from available budget numbers.
- School administrative costs increased from \$165,115 to \$527,220, an increase of over 219 percent.
- School administrators increased from a single full time Superintendent and clerical staff to six administrators and additional clerical staff, an increase in professional administrative personnel of over 500 percent.
- School Superintendents have changed four times, principals and assistant principals had come and gone and today there is not a single administrator working in the school system that was an administrator when this year's eighth grade student started kindergarten.

In the last nine years, school operating budgets (not including Special Ed.) have increased from approximately \$5 million to \$9.6 million, an increase of 92 percent. During the same time period, North Kingstown tuition cost per student to Jamestown increased from approximately \$6,400 to \$9,800 which represents 53 percent or a 5.5 percent annual increase of the nine-year period of time. Assuming this increase reflects the overall educational cost at NK and applying that same 5.5 percent annual increase, which is higher than inflation over that nine year period, to the Jamestown school budget would calculate to \$7.7 million in 2008, \$1.9 million less than the actual budget being presented for 08/09.

Sutton also said, "My math and my understanding of the numbers may have some flaws, but I have confidence that the errors are relatively small and should not significantly alter my conclusions."



Where in the World is the Jamestown Press?

Read, standing left, Billy, and Adrian, atop elephant, van der Wal took the Press with them to Koh Chang island in the eastern gulf of Thailand next to Cambodia. The elephant is retired from logging and now gives rides to tourists.

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