

Seawall to get major overhaul from state DOT

300-foot wall to be constructed in coming months

By Sam Bari

The Conanicus Avenue seawall is getting more than a repair and a facelift, according to the state's Department of Transportation.

"After inspecting the area since the April 16, 2007 storm that collapsed the seawall and the road behind it, we found other problems," state engineer David Morgan said.

The state was considering the project before the storm even occurred, Morgan said. "Then the storm expanded the problem, and after inspecting the area, we determined that just repairing the wall and the road would not be adequate in the long term," the engineer said.

Plans were sent out for bid on Jan. 18 of this year, Morgan said. "They include a seawall built outside of the present seawall, which will double the support. We designed a 300-foot wall for the purpose." Morgan said that the entire sidewalk is being replaced, so island residents will really benefit from an event that was initially a

disaster.

Town Engineer Michael Gray said that the engineering department at the state Department of Transportation has kept the town abreast of the state of the project since the beginning. "Initially, they made a substantial temporary repair to shore up the road as well as the existing wall," Gray said. "Everything is safe, and if another storm of that magnitude occurred, the road would not be in danger of collapsing."

Seven companies responded to the January bid, but the project has not yet been awarded, Gray said. Morgan said the bid will be awarded as soon as possible, but several factors that include availability to do the work on a schedule that is amenable to the town as well as the contractor needs to be considered.

"I can't give a concrete answer," Morgan said. "But I assure you, we are doing everything we can to start construction at the earliest possible date. If everything goes well, we'll do the job this summer. I'd like to say that it will be ready for spring, but the extent of the work is much more than

was originally considered. Consequently planning, designing, and bidding a project of this dimension required more time."

Morgan said that once construction begins, the town will not be inconvenienced to any great extent. "We'll probably have a construction lane on Conanicus Avenue for a few weeks, but it shouldn't impede traffic to any great degree," he added.

Ed Parker, who was the Department of Transportation chief engineer at the time of the storm said, "We knew we had a problem before the severity of the storm was even predicted. I was at the seawall discussing the project with Town Administrator Bruce Keiser just a couple of days before the storm hit. We talked about bidding out what appeared to be an approximately \$600,000 project. Then the worst scenario possible happened. We were slammed by the most devastating nor'easter the state has experienced in years. After the seawall collapsed on Monday, I declared a state of emergency and immediately brought in crews to make repairs to get traffic up and moving again."

Donate items to University of Rhode Island yard sale

The University of Rhode Island will hold a giant yard sale on Saturday, June 7, in the Keaney Gym parking lot.

Items can be dropped off at the Roger Williams Dining Hall kitchen on Wednesday evenings, begin-

ning May 7, from 4 to 6:30 p.m. On Friday, June 6, items can be dropped at the Keaney parking lot.

Tables are available for rent for \$25.

For more information, call Nancy Hawksley at 874-2840 or Gerri Beagle at 874-2460.

Donate old boating equipment to yard sale

The North Kingstown Sailing Team is looking for donations of nautical items for its fund-raising yard sale, which will be held on Saturday, May 10, from 8 a.m. to noon in the high school cafeteria.

Clothing, boat hardware, electronics and small boats are welcome. All items should be in good, working condition.

Yard sale tables are also available for rent to sell nautical gear.

In Jamestown, items can be dropped off at 55 Gondola Ave. on the front porch.

Please affix name and address to any donations so that a receipt can be sent. Call 423-3167 for more information.

Boat show coming to Newport this month

The 34th Annual Newport Spring Boat Show will present its most complete selection of boats and boating products when it runs for three days, May 16 to 18, at the Newport Yachting Center.

Included will be brokerage boats and new boat specials, boating products, equipment and accessories and, new this year, a "Marine Consignment Tent" filled with used items from boaters and boat dealers alike.

For the consignment center they ask boaters to bring their used marine equipment in good working condition, put a price on it and drop it off at the Newport Yachting Center starting Sunday, May 11 through Wednesday, May 14, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

For more information on the boat show, including how to put in items at the Marine Consignment Tent, contact Newport Exhibition Group at 846-1115 or visit the Web site at www.newport-springboatshow.com.

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