

Zoning board having a quiet spring

By Sam Bari

The Zoning Board of Review has had a quiet spring season, with few applications for new homes or renovations requiring variance from town building codes.

Applicant Thomas F. Alexander represented himself at Tuesday night's zoning meeting in a request for a variance at his 959 East Shore Rd. property. Alexander applied to construct an enclosed porch 16-feet from the southerly lot line instead of the required 30-feet. The house is located in an RR80 zone on a 26,500 square foot lot.

Chairman Thomas Ginnerty wrote a motion to deny the request because the application did not meet the requirements of the board to grant relief. The board agreed and upheld the motion to deny with a unanimous vote.

Residential designer Tyler Zagryn represented Robert and Meg Myles whose property is located at 7 Felucca Ave., in their application for a dimensional regulation variance. The application entailed adding a second-floor addition to an existing non-conforming structure which will be 2.6-feet from the northerly side of the lot line, 20-feet being required, and 20-feet from the easterly side or front lot line, 40-feet being required. The house is located in an R40 zone on a 28,800 square foot lot.

Board member Joe Logan wrote a motion to approve the request because the application satisfied the requirements of the board to grant relief. Ginnerty seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to approve the application.

In another matter, Providence Attorney Katherine McNamara Feodoroff represented Howard and Ann Huntoon in their application for a dimensional regulation variance governing the maximum

size of accessory structures. The application to demolish, rebuild and expand a non-conforming 18-by 20-foot shed, 4.3-feet from the front property line facing Coulter Street where 30-feet is required, and 2.5-feet from the northerly lot line, where 10-feet is required was met with mixed feelings by the board. The applicant purchased the property as a non-conforming lot because the original construction and configuration of buildings predated zoning. If the application were granted, the combined footprint of the accessory structures would expand to 655 square feet. The 11,407 square foot property is located in an R40 zone at 20 Coulter St.

Board member Richard Boren wrote a motion to deny the request because too many accessory buildings were on the small lot. Town Solicitor Wyatt Brochu said that withdrawing the motion was permissible under the circumstances. The applicant agreed to the restriction and Boren withdrew his motion to deny. Then he made a verbal motion to grant the application with restrictions.

Before seconding, Ginnerty suggested taking a straw vote to see if the remaining members of the panel agreed that removing the smaller building was enough to gain their support to approve the request. Board members Logan and Nardolillo did not agree that removing the structure was enough to grant relief. Consequently, Boren reinstated his original motion. The board voted 3-2 to deny the application.

An application from Jack F. Phelan, Jr., whose property is located on Gondola Street, was granted a continuance to the June meeting of the board at the request of zoning officer Fred Brown.



Members of the Lawn Avenue School eighth grade class posed with teacher Maureen McGuirl and councilwoman Barbara Szeptowski in front of their "Project Good Citizen" presentation proposing a Jamestown animal shelter to the Town Council.

Town Council mulls animal shelter plan

By Sam Bari

The matter of possibly using the old water treatment building to house unwanted pets was an agenda item at the regular meeting of the Town Council, which followed a workshop on the same topic. The council also discussed a near-term solution to Jamestown's problem of not currently having a contract with another town's shelter.

Councilwoman Barbara Szeptowski started off the discussion. "I want the council to vote on discussing an agreement with North Kingstown. I'm not looking for a vote on whether we can have a shelter. The North Kingstown dog pound is open for another year and we need a place to bring our animals that we can depend on. Meanwhile, we will continue looking for a place to have a small animal shelter in Jamestown."

She reiterated the request she made at the workshop and supported her case by saying that Paws and Claws and the Friends of the Jamestown Animal Shelter have a 7 1/2 year history of taking care of animals in need.

Councilman Robert Sutton who attended the regular meeting said, "I am opposed to the idea generally because animal shelters are expensive and require meeting a lot of regulatory requirements. Making a deal with facilities in other communities makes more sense."

Councilman Michael White said he was not opposed to the idea, but he had more questions. "However, I don't see any harm in looking at it," he said.

"Making a contract with another community like North Kingstown makes more sense to me," councilman Bill Kelly agreed. "The solicitor and town manager should come back to the council with a proposal of how an agreement can work. If we are considering an animal shelter, it cannot be based on the efforts of one individual; it has to work on its own. First you have to draw up a 501(C3) and have an organization, with a board of directors and a chairman to make a presentation," he added.

Szeptowski responded to Kelly's comments, saying, "We have a board of directors for the Friends

of the Jamestown Animal Shelter. I'm not even on it," she said.

Council President Julio DiGiando said, "I need to know the cost of an agreement with another town, the history of animal problems on the island, and how they've been handled in the past," he said.

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser said, "I need a sense of existing conditions, and then to take a look at all the options that are available. We need to know the statistical differences between dogs and cats. The town has never had an animal services policy. Until now, we haven't needed one."

Sutton added, "The animal shelter at the water treatment plant poses some problems. I think it will be too many uses for one place. And I don't think an animal shelter next to the treatment plant for our drinking water is necessarily a good idea."

Szeptowski said that she would come back with all the information requested by the council and asked for the discussion to continue on the next agenda.



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Chowder Cook-Off coming to Newport in June

The ever-popular Schweppes Great Chowder Cook-Off will celebrate its 27th year by featuring a smorgasbord of the best restaurants, 3,000 gallons of delicious chowder and a variety of entertainment for all ages. To be held at the Newport Yachting Center on America's Cup Avenue on Saturday, June 7, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., the festival is the original and longest running chowder championship in the world.

The Cook-Off offers all-you-can-eat "chowda" by award-winning chefs representing restaurants and institutional dining facilities throughout the country. Chefs compete for the coveted title of "Best Clam," "Best Seafood,"

and "Best Creative" chowder and \$10,000 in prizes by serving samples of their sumptuous creations to the thousands of chowder loving judges. Also returning is the "Clam Shack" competition with restaurants vying for the most delicious clam cakes in New England.

Schweppes, the festival's title sponsor, will once again hand out free ginger ale for all attendees. Additionally, Sea Watch International will serve free samples of their signature clam dishes and

Barefoot Wines will be back with the popular "Barefoot Beach" where attendees can sample different wine varietals and play games to win prizes. Tickets cost \$20. Children under the age of 12 are admitted for free with a paying adult. In order to avoid ticket lines, tickets can now be ordered online and printed at home by visiting www.newportfestivals.com. Tickets are also available through the Newport Yachting Center Box Office at 846-1600, ext. 3.

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