

Planners focus on zoning ordinances in village

By Sam Bari

Updating the zoning regulations in the Jamestown Village Special Development District was the focus of the Planning Commission's first meeting of the month on Sept. 17.

Town Planner Lisa Bryer reviewed the goals, policies and actions of the Comprehensive Plan, which includes the Affordable Housing Plan, as they relate to the update of the zoning ordinance in the village.

Commissioner Nancy Bennett expressed her concern about the Planning Commission not following the goals of the Comprehensive Plan or the vision from last fall's Charrette. Bennett also questioned whether the parking proposal is consistent with the parking studies that have been completed.

Bennett said, "The Comprehensive Plan states that the comprehensive parking plan should be done." She said that the commission is comprised of lay people and it should not be making some of those decisions. "It should be left up to the professionals," she said.

Planning Commission Chairman Gary Girard directed the board to contact the town planner if any of them have questions about whether "certain actions have been addressed."

Bennett wanted to discuss the goals for changing the zoning. She prepared and handed out several pages of a synopsis of the objectives and her interpretation of the impact of changing the zoning ordinance.

Girard said that the commission will not know the impacts of what it is proposing until deci-

sions are made suggesting what they want to do. Bennett asked the commissioners to have a detailed discussion of what the goals should be for the zoning ordinance update that they are currently doing. She said, "We are discussing only opinions in a piecemeal fashion."

Commissioner Richard Ventrone defended the commissioners' efforts by saying that the commission is trying to preserve the small town character of the commercial district. He said that the character is dictated by the building architecture, its presence on the street and its relationship with the street.

"Those are all the things that we should be looking at, and it is stated as a goal of the Charrette," Ventrone said. "Our consultant came in and identified Jamestown's character and what makes it so, and the vision is discussed in the Vision Report," he added.

Commissioner Barry Holland addressed Bennett's concerns about the process. "It has been very comprehensive," Holland said. "And, it is noted in the vision report, including their recommendations in the vision plan, which is a culmination of the Charrette process. The process is not haphazard," he said.

Vice Chairman Michael Swistak addressed Bennett's concern about needing a parking study. "The town and the Chamber of Commerce did a comprehensive parking study in 2004 that was approved by the Planning Commission," Swistak said. "We do not need to do another parking study."

Commissioner Jean Brown was concerned about Bennett's

questions and misunderstandings. She asked what the Planning Commission could do to help get Commissioner Bennett up to speed, "Because we need to all be on the same page going forward," Brown said.

Girard said, "The whole idea of having a board made up of residents is to get diverse input on how the town should be developed. We do need to make some decisions," he said. "And they may be difficult," he added.

Jack Brittain, president of Jack's Electric at 14 Clinton Ave., expressed his concerns about the T4 and T5 zoning changes affecting the commercial district and property values. Town Planner Bryer said afterwards that she could understand his concerns because the "transition" areas were the most difficult to define. She said she would call Brittain because she was interested in his input.

Several people attending the meeting said they were under the impression that residential areas were not included in the Charrette. Bryer said that from the onset the boundaries of the Charrette area, which were included on a map, went from Hamilton Avenue on the south side to Taylor Point on the north side.

Bryer then asked the commissioners to regulate roof pitch, fence styles and materials, as well as types of siding used in the commercial district.

In other old business, Attorney Ken Littman represented the Furtado Subdivision on Luther Street in their extension of a preliminary approval application. Littman went over the history of the application and its approval,

appeal and request for an extension.

He said that the costs of constructing the road are expensive. Consequently, the applicant is looking for financing options and wants to further assess their plans in terms of constructing the road and connecting utilities. "They are requesting a year extension," Littman said. A motion for approval carried with a unanimous vote.

Girard again emphasized that more people needed to attend the meetings concerning the zoning ordinance updates. "The future of the town lies in these ordinances," Girard said. "We need more input from property owners and those who care about what we are attempting to do. We cannot do this alone. We need to hear from residents so we know what they want."

Medical fund golf tournament rescheduled

The Jamestown Medical Fund Golf Tournament that was cancelled due to stormy weather on Sept. 6 has been rescheduled for Saturday, Oct. 11. The time for the shotgun start remains at 8 a.m.

The tournament is in memory of Phil Hunt, who lost his battle with cancer earlier this year, and was an avid golfer.

The format will be best ball and a lunch of hamburgers, hot dogs, chips and salad will be included, as well as nine holes and a cart. The entry fee is \$45 per person. There will be raffle prizes and first place prizes. A sign-up sheet is at the golf course.

This local charity's mission is to assist those in need and "bridge the gap" when medical expenses related to an injury or illness are not covered by insurance or personal resources.

The Jamestown Medical Fund obtains its funding from fundraisers and direct contributions from individuals in our community.

Applications may be obtained at Baker's Pharmacy and Jamestown Family Practice or by writing the JMF, at P.O. Box 236, Jamestown, RI 02835.



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Amstel 12 Pack Cans	\$13.75
Alice White Chard or Shiraz 1.5ltr	\$11.75
Cesari Pinot Grigio or Noir 1.5ltr	\$13.75
Ketel One Vodka 1.75ltr	\$34.75
Sailor Jerry's Rum 750ml	\$17.75

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