

# Preserving Jamestown's character is town planner's top priority

By Sam Bari

Jamestown Town Planner Lisa Bryer said that the downtown improvement project was the reason she applied for the job nearly 11 years ago.

Bryer lived in Jamestown with her family at the time, but she was the principal planner in South Kingstown. When she heard that Jamestown needed a planner and the Department of Transportation (DOT) was financing a downtown improvement project, she applied for the job.

"I always said that I didn't want to work in the same town where I lived," Bryer said. "But I've changed my mind about that. I thought I could be much more objective if I didn't live where I worked. However, that is not necessarily true."

"Because I live here, I have become part of the fabric of the community. My husband established a business here. Our children attend school here. We are involved with the town. Only when you are involved can you fully comprehend what your friends and neighbors want, and why," Bryer said. "And that understanding is the objective," she added.

According to Bryer, Jamestown is a planner's dream. "The town is so unique. The delicate balance between the rural farmlands, the residential areas, and the downtown commercial district must be maintained. Add the environmental and ecological considerations and everything that planners study for is all in one place," Bryer said.

"Urban design and planning is more than a job to me," Bryer said.



Jamestown Town Planner Lisa Bryer

"It is a passion. Unfortunately, it is close to 11 years in the making due to lack of federal funding." However, Bryer does see light at the end of a seemingly endless tunnel.

She said that the town will be sending out bids this fall and winter, although she doesn't expect to receive government money for at least another season, possibly two.

Meanwhile, Bryer said that the planning office and commission is working hard to complete the zoning ordinances and revise the comprehensive plan.

"If I can be instrumental in finishing this project, that will be wonderful," Bryer said. "Even though it hasn't gone as smoothly as I hoped when I agreed to take the job, being the town planner has given me an opportunity to initiate other projects and programs that will assure the preservation of Jamestown's charm, character, and wellbeing for future generations."

Bryer initiated the wastewater management program, including development of a plan and wastewater ordinance, as well as the high groundwater ordinance. She initiated the charrette, which was the town's first attempt to establish a future visioning program. She endured two plan rewrites and worked with the planning commissioners and consultants, as well as town residents and merchants throughout the charrette process.

"I've survived four town administrators and five town councils," Bryer said. "The downside of the job is maintaining a sense of continuity from one administration to the next. That is a big challenge," she said.

If she can be remembered as the town planner who established programs and initiatives that preserved the special character of Jamestown, then she will feel as if she has done her job, Bryer said.

Bryer, 46, was born in Madison, Wisconsin. She left Madison with her family when she was 2-years old because of her father's work in pharmaceutical manufacturing.

She attended Southampton College, where she majored in marine biology. Bryer changed her major and earned a bachelor's degree in environmental science with a concentration in planning. She then earned a master's in community planning from the University of Rhode Island.

Bryer's work experience has taken her from Jamestown, where she worked for an environmental sciences and planning firm, to New Jersey, where she worked for a private planning consulting com-

pany. After she married, she went to Florida with her husband who was studying golf course management at the Golf Academy of the South.

While she was there, she was the chief of environmental planning for Orange County for two years.

When they returned to Rhode Island, Bryer worked for the municipality of South Kingstown as its principal planner from 1995 to 1997. She then applied for the job with Jamestown and has been the town planner ever since.

Bryer lives in Jamestown with Jim Bryer, her husband of 15 years. The Bryers have two children, Rachel, 12, and Ian, age 8.



## Where in the World is the Jamestown Press?

L. Leigh Gribble had his photo taken in front of the historic Odessa National Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet in Odessa, Ukraine on Oct. 15 during a recent business trip.

## Who supports Democrat Deb Ruggiero for State Representative in Middletown and Jamestown?



### Olin Gambrell

Gambrell's Glass Co., Middletown

"I own a small business. That means that one of the most important issues for me is the cost of health care. Deb has creative ideas about solving our health care crisis. **I know I can count on her to go to the State House, where she'll put me and my employees first.**"



# WE DO!

Join us in voting for Deb on November 4th  
For more information, go to [www.DebRuggiero.com](http://www.DebRuggiero.com)  
Or call Deb at 401-423-0444

### Muriel and Pat Falco

Jamestown

"The way things have been going recently, we're more worried than ever about being secure in our retirement. We know that **Deb Ruggiero is committed to issues important to seniors.** We trust Deb to do what's right for us at the State House."



Reid Losee with daughters Oksana and Natasha  
Jamestown

"With all of the problems facing Rhode Island and our country, **our family is ready for someone with fresh ideas and new energy.** I'm looking forward to voting for Deb."



Maureen McGuirl  
7th and 8th grade teacher  
Jamestown

"I work with kids every day, and see them committed to being environmentalists, to preserve our planet. I want to make sure that our government is learning the same things that my students are, so they can be assured of a healthy future. **I know Deb will be a leader at the State House on keeping us green.**"