

# Point

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for legal and negotiated considerations, Keiser presented Darlington with a check to the Turnpike and Bridge Authority for \$80,758.30.

According to Keiser, the closing on the property had been delayed while the parties were continuing to negotiate a payment plan. Last August, the town proposed to waive annual contractual payments from RITBA of approximately \$25,000 until the full amount of the purchase was satisfied. RITBA agreed to consider this option. While the parties were continuing to negotiate, the bid for the project was awarded to A. Autiello Construction and the company began work.

With the initial phase of construction underway, RITBA officials expressed concern about liability prior to the transfer of the property. Keiser responded to their concerns by offering to have the town solicitor draft a separate indemnification contract for third parties working on another party's property that was worded to RITBA's satisfaction.

RITBA authorities agreed to the arrangement, Keiser said. However, they did not feel comfortable with work being performed on their portion of the barn site while they were waiting for the contract to be drafted, approved, and signed.

Keiser consulted with Town Finance Director Tina Collins and they determined that it would be in the best interests of the town to close on the property to save additional legal fees and "put the matter behind us," Keiser said. The land purchase will be paid from Highway Barn project funds approved in 1999 and 2005.

Although work could have continued on the larger portion of land owned by the town, Keiser agreed to suspend all activities on the project until legal matters were resolved. Consequently, work was suspended for three days to complete the transaction.

If the town agreed to suspend work until a satisfactory indemnification contract or negotiations for an extended payment agreement were completed, they could risk losing the sub-contractor responsible for the steel work until January because the firm is contracted to start another project in mid-November.

A delay of any length would affect the schedules of all sub-contractors and put the projected completion date of the project in jeopardy. "Closing on the property was the best decision," Keiser said. "The matter is behind us, and work can now commence without further delay." The barn will be fully enclosed by late December with an anticipated completion by March 2009.

# Council

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question and answer discussion with the council.

Citizens were given the opportunity to question GZA and air their grievances at the Oct. 27 Town Council meeting. Monday's meeting was reserved for questions from the council, although many residents attended both meetings, and a few spoke about the closure during the open forum after the vote for approval had taken place.

Councilman Robert Sutton was not happy that provisions for housing the \$150,000 in equipment had not been considered. "We can't just leave that equipment out in the weather to deteriorate like that," Sutton said.

He suggested that a 1,200 square foot area on the blacktop be set aside for a low-cost canvas and hoop building that would be adequate for storing the equipment. Town Council President Julio DiGiando and councilman William Kelly supported the idea, and Town Administrator Bruce Keiser agreed.

Sutton made a motion to approve the plan with a revision that indicated a storage building for the equipment on the blacktopped area. The motion passed with a 3-2 vote.

Council members Michael White and Barbara Szepatowski cast the dissenting votes. Szepatowski said that she didn't have enough time to review the revised closure plan in detail because the council wasn't given copies until the previous Friday afternoon.

She also said that she didn't understand the hurry to vote on such an emotional issue when there were so many questions that had not been answered to everyone's satisfaction.

"I don't understand why we're in such a hurry when everybody doesn't feel comfortable," Szepatowski said.

White agreed, but did not give specific reasons for voting against the motion to approve.

Sutton said that the town had been working to close the landfill for 11 years, and no matter how many revisions were considered, everyone would not be satisfied. He said that it was time to get it over with and move on to something else.

DiGiando agreed and said that this was the first opportunity the council has had to vote for a finished plan. He also said that the plan was good and it was time to stop discussions and make a decision.

## Fort Getty

In other business, Fort Getty Committee Chairwoman Mary

Meagher spoke about developments at the park, and particularly mentioned how the committee would like to start the sailing program that had been approved several years ago. She also mentioned that Fort Getty was one of the locations the wind committee was considering for locating a wind turbine. She said that they were in the process of updating the master plan.

DiGiando said that many committees had interests in the development and use of the town-owned park and suggested a multi-committee workshop to talk about the possibilities and direction. Meagher agreed and Town Administrator Keiser suggested a meeting on Jan. 22 of 2009. It was decided that all of the interested committees and organizations would be invited.

## Hunting

The Town Administrator reported that the hunting season at the designated section of Beavertail State Park would extend from Nov. 10 to Jan. 31, 2009. There will be no hunting on weekends prior to Dec. 31. Either sex can be harvested, and antlerless deer permits are valid for this season for archery hunting only. No shotguns or muzzle loaders are permitted.

Licensed archery hunters must apply at the police station for Beavertail permits.

*sweet berry*



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# School

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said. She also indicated a desire for the money to be used by students seeking a fine arts education at the Rhode Island School of Design or some similar institution. "This is a preference of Elizabeth Stone's, but it is not a legal requirement of the will," Anthony said. Stone was not known to school panel members or to school administrators—most of whom expressed shock at the size and generosity of the gift. "There is no history of a gift of this size that I recall," said Lawn Avenue School Principal Kathy Almanzor.

Little is known about the benefactor or the reasons behind her very generous gift. "I represented Ms. Stone, but I don't know very much about her personally. I do know that she came to live here in Jamestown about 30 years ago and that she had an antique shop on Narragansett Avenue at one time," Anthony said.

Committee members and school administrators briefly discussed how best to use the money. "The money has been placed in an account with a 3-percent interest rate," Anthony said. Superintendent Dr. Marcia Lukon introduced the possibility of keeping the principal safe and using the yearly interest for scholarships. "We'll need to decide whether

to use the bulk of the money for scholarships or as an investment with the profit reserved for scholarships," Lukon said.

School committee member B.J. Whitehouse suggested, "I think we should consider ways in which the money can be used to benefit as many students as possible." This seemed to be the prevailing sentiment as other committee members nodded their assent. The money will be used to establish a scholarship fund—the Elizabeth Stone Fund—to assist Jamestown high school graduates attending four-year colleges.

Anthony pointed out the need for some legal checks and balances. "We are going to have to establish some procedures regarding how the money is going to be used and distributed," Anthony said. "Potential conflict of interest issues and other concerns will have to be addressed." Anthony volunteered to assist with the resolution of these concerns and School Committee Chairwoman Cathy Kaiser called for the appointment of a subcommittee. Kaiser and school board Vice President Julie Kalfelz agreed to serve on this subcommittee and work with Anthony on drafting procedures for fund management.

The subcommittee will share their recommendations with the committee at an upcoming business meeting. According to Anthony, the money should be available for the fall of 2009.

In other business: Committee members agreed that the joint meeting between the School Committee and the Jamestown Town Council was productive. They expressed the hope that continued communication will result in greater cooperation at the budget hearings this spring.

Supt. Lukon led a discussion of strategic planning. The committee decided to schedule strategic planning sessions in March or April 2009. There will be two full workday sessions on a Friday and Saturday with an orientation meeting held prior. The district's focus will be on "rigor and relevance." The planning process will be divided into two stages. The first stage will involve a core group of no more than 20 members who are familiar with school policies and mandates. This group will create the base plan. The second stage will be comprised of a broader based group who will be responsible for implementing the action plans to meet the core group's objectives.

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