

Long

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tions. In 2005, he was recognized as the longest serving member of the Rhode Island House of Representatives.

"I was always interested in public service," Long said, though he admits that "back then I didn't know a whole lot about the process." What he did know was that he wanted to have a role in protecting businesses. "I did know that government can help businesses to flourish while providing regulatory safeguards. I wanted to be involved in seeing that this happened," Long said.

Throughout his years of service, Long said he primarily focused on insuring that government supported businesses, that government was accessible and transparent to the people, and that he was responsible to his constituents and addressed their concerns. "Almost every issue that I was involved in was brought to me by one of my constituents," Long said. "For instance, in my second year of representing Jamestown, a local resident approached me about her concerns regarding overdevelopment in Jamestown Shores. I listened to her concerns, became informed about the issue and then spoke out against overdevelopment."

One of the greatest changes Long observed during his many years in politics was the progressive openness of government. "Prior to 1981, the leadership didn't even allow the press on the floor. Also, thirty years ago there was no guarantee that a bill would be heard unless the leadership wanted it heard. Now, there is a lot more public access to government and the rules require that if a bill's sponsor requests an up and down vote, the committee has

to at least hear the bill. This gives the public a chance to see where each representative stands on controversial bills," Long said.

One issue that is currently facing legislators, that Long wishes he could have been around to see resolved, concerns Senator Bill Irons challenge of the Ethics Committee. According to Long, Senator Irons was charged with abuse of power by the Ethics Committee due to his chairing committees entrusted to make decisions that affected insurance agencies while simultaneously being employed by those same agencies. Irons, according to Long, challenged the Ethics Committee in court, stating that it was not within the committee's power to charge him and was, in fact, a violation of his constitutional right to free speech and debate as a lawmaker. Long said that the Rhode Island Superior Court sided with Irons and that the case is now going to be heard by the Rhode Island Supreme Court. "If the Supreme Court also sides with Irons, then I think legislation ought to be introduced to close this loophole in order to make sure that abuses of power are not tolerated," Long said. He still hopes to see this resolved, though he acknowledged that he would not be in office by then.

As for future plans, Long will say only that he plans to spend time with his family, tend to his business, and wait to see what the future holds. "All of my life, whenever things seemed to be negative, they almost always turned out to be positive," Long said. "I am very happily married and I'll now have more time to spend with my wife and family," he added. On the subject of any future run for political office, Long was non-committal. "I've been getting some calls," was all he would say about it for now.



Housing

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the downtown village.

The application requested two variances. The existing house on the east side of Pemberton Avenue does not currently meet the front yard setback and the proposed lot requires 80 feet of frontage where 29 is proposed.

According to Town Planner Lisa Bryer in her report, the applicant has provided a well-organized application referencing all required items by both town zoning ordinance and state law. Bryer said that she believes that all items, which needed to be addressed, were included in the application.

Steve Ostiguy of Church Community Housing explained the agency's participation in the project and their position on the ownership of the property. He said that their plan was to keep the existing dwelling as a two-bedroom house. He said that the property would be purchased with \$50,000 from a federal community development block grant and that \$15,000 is

available from the town.

However, abutters to Lawless' property voiced concerns about his proposal. Mary Ann Oldewurtel said that when she applied for a variance to the zoning board for the house on her abutting property, one of the stipulations for approving her application was that she would use wooden shingles. She said it was more expensive, but she agreed and complied.

Oldewurtel wanted to know if Church Housing would be required to do the same thing to be consistent with the rest of the village. She also had concerns about the location of the garage being too close to her property.

David and Ellen Betzer had concerns about the new building blocking the sun to their backyard. Additionally, the Betzers said that they had a drainage issue that would only get worse if a building were constructed where Lawless proposed to erect his new house.

Although Jamestown Attorney John A. Murphy represented Lawless in his application, Lawless, an engineer, acted as an expert witness. He had given a letter ad-

ressing the drainage problem to Town Engineer Michael Gray, who reviewed the proposal and passed the letter out to the commissioners at the meeting. Gray said that Lawless' proposal showed him that the plans will handle the drainage and that the new construction would not exacerbate the problem.

The commissioners wanted an opportunity to review the letter from Gray, as well as the other concerns of the abutters before making a decision.

Chairman Gary Girard motioned to continue the case to the Dec. 3 meeting to give the commissioners adequate time to review the case and weigh the concerns of the abutters. The commissioners unanimously agreed to continue the case to the next meeting.

Early in the meeting, Chairman Girard motioned to postpone the zoning amendment portion of the meeting because the heat at Town Hall was not working. Girard said that he only wanted to address the Lawless case because of the number of people who had attended the public hearing that would be inconvenienced if the case were continued.

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Prout school to present Christmas program

On Thursday, Dec. 18, the Prout School will present its annual Christmas Show featuring a classical ballet performance of "The Nutcracker," by Tchaikovsky followed by performances from all members of the music department.

The Nutcracker will last approximately 40 minutes and will be followed by the Christmas concert with a ten-minute intermission between shows.

Under the direction of the school's new music teacher Sarah Geremia, this year's concert will feature pieces from the show chorus, string ensemble, jazz band, chorus and concert band. The show begins at 7 p.m. in the school's auditorium. Tickets will be sold at the door for \$5.

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