

# Meeting

Continued from page 1

afternoon said that Davisville Middle School was the backup location for the meeting.

Students came armed with signs and flashlights to "shed light on how athletics and academics go hand-in-hand."

Three student-athletes, one former athlete, two coaches and Rhode Island Interscholastic League Executive Director Tom Mezzanotte spoke about the connection between athletics and academics before School Committee Chairman Larry Ceresi called a recess and told the crowd that if

they did not clear out the meeting would have to be canceled.

Mezzanotte said he felt compelled to come to the meeting and speak up because he felt there was "especially an injustice being done to the students."

"Athletics is part of educating kids. It is an important part of the total development of students as an extension of the classroom," he said. "Having a great athletic program that is a community effort like North Kingstown has doesn't happen by chance. You don't just throw that away. You respect it, cherish it."

The RIIL director said that athletes do not remember the wins and losses long after they

have left high school, but they do remember the lessons learned on the field, from teammates and from coaches. "Athletics makes kids better time managers, better problem solvers, better students. We have seen that at RIIL and all the way up through the National Federation of High Schools."

Sean Malone, a former NK athlete and the son-in-law of Jamestown Designs owner Debbie Swistak, spoke about the importance athletics and about the athletic director, who played a major role in his life.

"I am not someone who likes to get up and speak in public, but I felt strongly enough about this that I had to speak up," he said.

"I work in Boston, so my wife and I could have moved closer to my job, but I live in North Kingstown because I wanted my four kids to have the same opportunities that my wife and I had growing up."

Swistak said she could think of 100 positive adjectives to describe the NKHS athletic director and program, but was not happy with the school committee's decision. "This is absolutely outrageous. I can't believe they would even consider this," she said. "All four of our children graduated college, three from URI and one from Brown, and athletics was a major part of their academic success."

Track coach Charlie Breagy said that not only do sports help

students be more successful in the classroom, but they keep kids out of trouble, as well.

Multi-sport athlete Cody Normand told the school committee that the cuts hurt in more ways than one. "It is not true that the school committee gives the athletic department 100 percent of everything we need to play sports," he said. "Every sport participates in fundraisers for their team and this year we have buses that will take us to only three of our 15 baseball games. Parents will have to spend gas money and miles to get us there."

People who lingered after the meeting said they planned on attending the re-scheduled meeting at 10 a.m. this Saturday, Feb. 28, at Davisville Middle School.

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## Family fun at Save the Bay Exploration Center

The Narragansett Bay-themed aquarium and learning center will be open and admission will be FREE from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 28. Check out creature exhibits; learn about Save The Bay programs and camps; meet new Executive Director Jonathan Stone. Horseshoe crab encounters at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; critter feeding at 1 p.m. Some 150 species on display, including a new octopus. The Exploration Center is located at Easton's Beach, Newport. For directions and information visit [www.savebay.org](http://www.savebay.org) or call 401-324-6020.

## Job seminar to be held at Christ Church

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Three highly qualified individuals will share important information that can make a difference. Please join us for this free seminar, Saturday, February 28th from 9:30 am to noon at Christ Church, 1025 Main Street in East Greenwich.

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