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Jamestown officials outline LNG concerns

By Phil Zahodiakin

As a long-standing proposal to ship liquefied natural gas (LNG) up the East Passage gains momentum, so does concern about potential disruptions in and around Jamestown. A recent Coast Guard conclusion that an LNG terminal would not pose navigational risks if it were sited in Mt. Hope Bay has increased the possibility that the project will win a federal permit.

Under the proposal from Weaver's Cove Energy, LNG tankers would use the East Passage for the journey to the terminal, which would be built a mile from the Fall River shoreline. Whenever a loaded tanker steamed north, both the Pell and Mt. Hope bridges would have to be closed as the ships approached and departed.

"First and foremost are the safety concerns about the volatility of the cargo, and the risk of either an accident or terrorist activity that could ignite the ship, which would have devastating consequences for any nearby communities," said Town Administrator Bruce Keiser.

"In addition to the safety issues," Keiser said, "we are also concerned about [navigational prohibitions when loaded LNG tankers steam north] because the East Passage is very heavily trafficked by recreational boaters throughout

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With final numbers, schools look to future

By Eileen M. Daly

Passed by the General Assembly and signed by the governor in late June, the final state budget for Rhode Island's schools has been established and the necessary cuts have been made. According to Jamestown School Committee Chairperson Cathy Kaiser, Jamestown has been "level-funded" – with the exception of professional development funds – but not by the state.

"The state withdrew 'state' aid and replaced it with federal stimulus funds. Unfortunately for districts, the two types of aid are not wholly interchangeable. Federal restrictions govern the use of stimulus funds — we can't simply apply these funds to cover our operating expenses," Kaiser said.

Although the cuts in professional development funds were expected, Kaiser did express concern regarding the state's conceptualization of how this loss will be offset.

"As we anticipated, the state eliminated professional development funds for all districts. This loss is supposedly offset by the present suspension of district contributions to the pension fund. However, it is clear from all studies of the pension fund — past, present, and ongoing — that the fund is woefully underfunded and we anticipate that when the inevitable pension reform is enacted at

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Filing deadline is next week for town office candidates

Voters may have a limited field of candidates from which to choose

By Jeff McDonough

Island campaign politics begin again next week, as Jamestowners will go to the polls in November to elect a town moderator, five Town Council members and three School Committee members.

The filing deadline for candidates seeking office this fall is the first hurdle in the process. Candidates must file the proper legal paperwork with the Jamestown Board of Canvassers at Town Hall on Thursday, Aug. 20, and Friday, Aug. 21.

The candidate filing period closes at 4 p.m. on Aug. 21.

Karen Montoya, who serves as the clerk to the Board of Canvassers, said island voters will also be asked to approve several amendments to the Town Charter in the fall election.

One charter amendment would change the timing of Jamestown's future local elections to align with the state and national elections, Montoya said. The proposed change would save the town about $10,300 per election, she said, and could result in a larger voter turnout in local elections.

Typically, about twice as many

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The fire horn is back after being silenced for several weeks while a defective valve was repaired.

Photo by Jeff McDonough

Fire horn sounds again – to dismay of some neighbors

Firefighters say they need the annoying alarm

By Dara Chadwick

If you have ever been downtown when the fire horn sounds, you know full well what the heart-pounding aftermath of being close to its ear-splitting signal feels like.

"It's just too fierce," said Scott Wynn, a resident who lives on Clinton Avenue. "That thing scares the heart out of you."

Fierce, yes…but also necessary, according to Howie Tighe, a deputy chief of the Jamestown Fire Department.

The horn "lets firefighters know there's a fire, but it also lets the public know there's a problem," he said.

The subject of the fire horn and its volume – one that is sometimes hotly debated in Jamestown – resurfaced recently after some island residents noticed an eerie, peaceful sound a few weeks back: Silence.

An air valve in the horn broke, leaving it inoperable for several weeks while a replacement part was ordered, according to Tighe. The replacement part, which cost $200, was defective and had to be ordered again, he added.

The ensuing silence has once again stirred debate about the purpose of the fire horn. Is it simply a bit of nostalgia? Does the town really still need it?

Yes, Deputy Chief Tighe said.

Opponents of the horn, including Victor Bell, whose business, Enviro-Pac, is located diagonally across the street from the fire station on Narragansett Avenue, say that the fire horn is no longer necessary in an age of cellular phones and pagers.

"I actually think it's not necessary at all," Bell said. "Everyone has beepers."

While it is true that Jamestown firefighters are now equipped with pagers, Tighe said the horn is still "an important and integral part of the public

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