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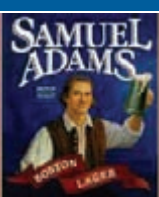
\$22.75

Seagrams 7 Crown 1.75 LTR



\$18.95

Sam Adams Lager 12 Pack Bottles



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Meridian Chardonnay 1.5 LTR



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2 for \$15
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Charter referenda previewed for taxpayer association

By Phil Zahodiakin

Referenda proposed to revise the Jamestown Town Charter were outlined for the Jamestown Taxpayers Association during the Aug. 26 meeting of the fledgling group. The ballot questions, which were variously recommended by the Town Council and the Town Charter Review Committee, have been filed with the Rhode Island Secretary of State.

Under its charter, Jamestown must review, and consider revisions to, its charter at least once every six years (although the council has the discretion to revise the charter at any time).

Sav Rebecchi, who served on the current Charter Review Committee, presented the new referenda at the invitation of the taxpayers group.

The ballot questions will ask Jamestown residents to decide, among other things:

- Whether Town Council elections should be held at the same time as those held by all other Rhode Island municipalities, which hold their town elections on the general-election cycle. Eliminating off-year elections, the Town Council concluded, would spare the town the expense of holding an additional election in general-election years.

- Whether the residency requirement for town officials should be deleted from the charter, to put the town in line with a state law prohibiting Rhode Island municipalities from enforcing residency requirements.

- Whether Town Council members should be prohibited from “directing, supervising or interfering with the work of town employees.”

- Whether the requirement for a personnel board should be deleted from the charter.

- Whether the position of town moderator should be filled by the “next-highest vote-getter from the most recent election” if the position becomes vacant.

- Whether special meetings of the Town Council could be held only upon “majority consent” of the Town Council members.

- Whether the charter should define the town library as “a free and public library for all the inhabitants” of Jamestown, thereby ensuring that library membership remains free for Jamestown residents.

At least one member of the tax group opposes switching from the off-year election cycle because the existing cycle prevents Jamestown voters from “getting tangled up in state elections and issues.” Going forward, the group would support as “sensible” any charter revisions that would enable the public to offer input at all Town Council meetings. A plan to request revisions facilitating open forums – probably by petitioning the Town Council – is being formulated by a member of the group.

Tax group member David Cain raised the issue of the FAST proposal to build and run a sailing school at Ft. Getty. The group has been outspoken in its opposition to a Town Council vote on the sailing school before the proposal and its costs are fully detailed. Although the proposal has been shelved for now, it is likely to be resubmitted, and Cain suggested writing a letter asking the Town Council to request that the town planner prepare a formal Ft. Getty development plan “in its entirety.”

“There’s a Ft. Getty Commission,” Cain said, “but I haven’t seen [any development proposals] except for the sailing school, which could leave us liable for the purchase of 10 sailboats at a cost of \$30,000 a piece. And I still haven’t seen any figures specified for that purchase.”

Cain also brought up the recent Town Council workshop on the 88 properties acquired through tax-default foreclosures.

“There was a surge of opposition on the Town Council against selling the lots in order to protect wetlands. But, I don’t know why they didn’t consider designating the lots as [ground water] recharge areas. We have an infrastructure in place for that designation, which provides built-in protection against development on the properties without asking the [Conanicut Island Land Trust or the Conservation Commission] to add to their expenses” by entering into agreements with the town to police the properties.

The next meeting of the Taxpayers Association will be held Tuesday, Sept. 8, at the Jamestown Senior Center. Meetings are open to the public.

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