

Ft. Getty

Continued from page 1

20-year bond, the rule of thumb for annual debt service is 7 percent of face value, or \$75,000," he said. That would be a significant addition to Jamestown's operating budget, particularly in this fiscal climate, so a bond would have to be given careful consideration during budget review in terms of what it would mean for the tax rate, Keiser added.

"I think that there's a desire to find alternative sources of revenue to assist in improvements at Ft. Getty, in addition to the money we already have set aside: \$250,000 on the town side and \$150,000 through a state grant," he said. "Pursuing state grants designated for historic parks, especially given the significance of Ft. Getty, would be a future opportunity, but that's not going to get us all the money we need, which is why we need to look into the feasibility of other possible sources, such as a wedding-and-banquet facility behind the Rembijas Pavilion. Given the tremendous scenic qualities of Ft. Getty, a facility like that could be very competitive in the Rhode Island market for those kinds of events."

Discussion is needed

The spectacular views at Ft. Getty belie the frustrations at the campground, where all 105 of the RV slots are occupied (and another 102 people are paying \$10 a year just to be on the waiting list). Requesting anonymity, a number of seasonal residents told the Press that they have been dealing with, among other problems: "inadequate" electrical service and "electrical shocks" to people who touch metal surfaces while standing on wet grass; a "disgraceful" boat ramp; rules violations, such as campfires burning too closely to adjacent RVs; "untrimmed vegetation" along the western edge of the campground; "unreliable" grass-mowing; "tea-colored tap water" and a "deplorable" bathroom and shower facility.

In her public comments during the Sept. 8 meeting of the Town Council, a seasonal resident, Jane Enos, said that it was "imperative" for the town and the campers to have "mutual discussions," adding that the residents would be willing to set up an association for the purpose of facilitating those

discussions. However, in a subsequent response, Parks and Recreation Department Director Bill Piva questioned the need for an association because he said he would prefer to hear from all the seasonal residents of Ft. Getty.

"Come to the recreation department and talk to the maintenance staff," he said. "That's the procedure we have. But I've had only two [seasonal residents] come into the office during this entire season."

To ensure that he hears from as many seasonal residents as possible before the campground closes on Oct. 5, Piva has slated a town hall-style meeting for Saturday, Oct. 3 at the Rembijas Pavilion.

"We'll sit around the picnic tables and talk about the issues," Piva told the Press. "It will be a civil meeting where they'll have the opportunity to bring up their complaints, and my angle to them will be that I have two full-time maintenance staff - two more during the season, but only after the campground opens - for a huge list of work. Like every other department, we're pulled from many different directions. Ft. Getty isn't all we do. Look at all the programs we run. We have many, many responsibilities besides Ft. Getty."

When asked for his opinion of the bathroom and shower facility at Ft. Getty, Piva said, "Deplorable, and my maintenance staff takes a bad rap for that. We do an acid wash at the beginning and the end of the season and, in between, they paint and scrub. But until I have a green light from higher-ups to put some money into renovating the facility, all we can do is keep applying band-aids. When I was a kid growing up in this town, I worked in the rec. department and I cut the grass and cleaned the bathrooms at Ft. Getty. Sadly, they haven't changed in 30 years as far as how they are. They're old and outdated. We had a malfunction in one of the urinals and it took the

plumber over a week to find the part he needed to fix it."

But, Piva added, the department is not going to sink money into renovations if, a year later, the council decides - as the Master Plan proposes - to move everyone away from the western side of the campground and build a bathroom facility somewhere else.

"So, the upshot is, we've been 'running in quicksand,'" he said.

Piva strongly disputed the allegation that his maintenance crew was not mowing the grass at Ft. Getty regularly, and said that there were clear procedures in place for residents to follow in the event of rules violations.

He also repeated his frustration that seasonal residents are not alerting his department to problems, noting, for example, that "I just found out that someone's water filter turned black in just one day, so I called [the Department of Public Works] and they went right down to flush the system - but I need to know about the problems. If [the residents] keep them secret, what am I supposed to do?"

Piva had National Grid look into the electrical shock problem last year, but "they didn't finish until after the campers had left, so we didn't find out that the problem wasn't rectified until they returned this season. But it's not as if we haven't been paying attention to the problem," he said.

'The problem is a demand issue'

In response to complaints about inadequate electrical service, Piva said that the problem is actually a demand issue.

"One mistake we made that we won't make again going forward is allowing in RVs drawing more than 50 amps into the campground," he said. "We supply 30 amps, but these RVs aren't anything like the campers we remember from the past. A lot of them are fully appliances with washers and dryers and

wide-screen TVs."

The electrical shock problem has not been resolved, according to Keiser.

"National Grid has sent their 'best and brightest' out to find the source of the stray voltage and, as of last Friday, they still don't know," he said.

Like Piva, Keiser questioned the justification for providing significantly more electrical power to the campground.

"Clearly, there has not been significant re-investment in the campground, but it's always been pretty bare bones. Now that the infrastructure is wearing out, it is incumbent on the town to bring it up to standard," he said. "But any

requests for a major increase in electrical service calls into question what the town should be providing."

The numbers that the town is looking at to improve the campground are significant, Keiser said.

"So we've reached a tipping point in looking at where we want to be in relation to [the income] Ft. Getty provides to the town," he said.

The Ft. Getty Master Plan Committee meeting slated for Thursday, Sept. 24, will be held at 9 a.m. at Jamestown Town Hall. A start time for the Saturday, Oct. 3 "town hall meeting" at Ft. Getty has yet to be determined.

THE SHACK

at Dutch Harbor

**Now serving breakfast and lunch
on the west side of Jamestown.**

Benjamin Thomas Gallery

Summer HOURS:
Mon-Sat: 10am - 6pm
Sunday: Noon - 5pm

2 East Ferry Wharf
Jamestown, RI 02835

- Specialized Printing:
- Fine Art Photography of the area
- Photo Restoration and Reproduction
- Commercial Photography:

Store: (401) 560-0479
Cell: (617) 448-7477
www.benthomasgallery.com

www.jamestownfitness.com

Mon-Thurs: 5:30 am-8 pm	36 Southwest Avenue
Friday: 5:30 am-7 pm	Jamestown, Rhode Island 02835
Sat-Sun: 7 am-3 pm	T: (401) 560-0300 F: (401) 560-0301

KRISTINE S. TROCKI

Attorney and Counsellor at Law

KRISTINE S. TROCKI

RESOLVES DISPUTES IN
THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- PERSONAL INJURY
- AUTO ACCIDENTS
- PRODUCT LIABILITY
- MEDICAL MALPRACTICE
- WRONGFUL DEATH
- LANDLORD/TENANT
- EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION
- WRONGFUL DISCHARGE
- MINOR CRIMINAL OFFENSES
- DIVORCE MEDIATION
- BUSINESS & CONTRACT DISPUTES
- COLLECTIONS

38 Narragansett Avenue, Suite D, Jamestown, RI 02835
tel 401.423.3390 | fax 401.423.3370 | kst@trockilaw.com

Book discussion at Tennis Hall of Fame

The International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum will host author L. Jon Wertheim this evening, Sept. 17, at 6 p.m. for a signing and discussion of his new book, *Strokes of Genius*, which takes readers on a fantastic journey through the rivalry between Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer during the historic 2008 Wimbledon finals match.

A senior writer for *Sports Illustrated*, Wertheim has covered an array of topics and has written various sports-related books on martial arts, pool, basketball and tennis.

Admission is free for members of the International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum; \$10 for non-members.

Contact 849-3990 or visit www.tennisfame.com for more information.

Concert

Sunday, September 20, 2009
Four o'clock p.m.
St. Matthew's Church, Jamestown

Musical Dolce Chamber Players

Paul Rosenbloom *Piano*

Ann Samuelson *Violin*

Robert Hayden *Clarinet*

Free admission sponsored by
Jamestown Community Piano Association