

Hopes rise for sinking ferry pier

By Phil Zahodiakin

The Jamestown Harbor Commission last week decided that it is time to pursue a restoration of the deteriorating East Ferry pier. The Sept. 16 decision to request layout sketches of a renovated pier followed a PowerPoint presentation by Town Council member Bill Kelly, who is anxious to turn the eyesore into a gem.

The roughly 2,000-square-foot finger-shaped pier, which has been in disrepair since ferry service was discontinued in 1968, is a peninsula of rocks with a concrete cap. The surface of the cap is intact, but the far end of the pier is subsiding into the harbor.

The absence of a railing around the pier, along with its uneven surface, worries Kelly, who said he has seen “kids on that pier riding bikes and skateboards at night – and the pier is not well-lit. Is that the best use of the pier? Or, do we want a pier with railings and a wooden

deck and tables for boaters and non-boaters to sit and enjoy the waterfront?”

Kelly provided the *Jamestown Press* with a preview of his PowerPoint slides over coffee at Spinner’s; Jamestowners walking by looked with interest at a 2007 rendering of proposed East Ferry improvements, all expressing their support of a renovation.

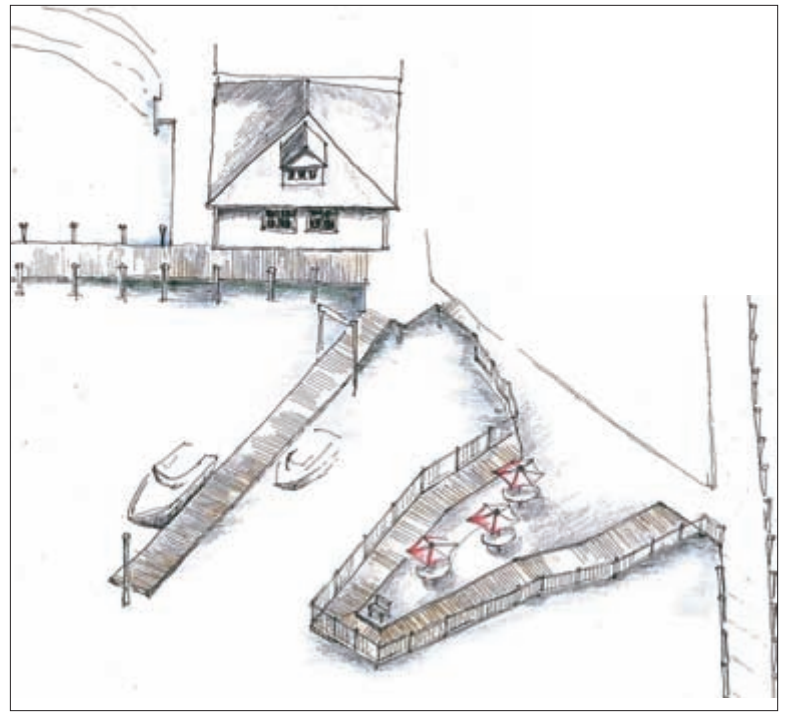
“You see?” Kelly said. “Everyone wants to see this done. I decided to make a presentation to the commission because the idea has been languishing for far too many years, and we really need to get rid of this sore thumb and take advantage of the terrific asset that the pier could be.”

The 2007 sketch surfaced during the Downtown Visioning Charrette, an urban planning conference for Jamestown business owners and local residents. Kelly says that, besides eliminating the “attractive nuisance” that the pier has become, a renovation

would enhance the business environment along that stretch of waterfront while, at the same time, serve as a staging area for boaters tying off at the touch-and-go dock and waiting to pick up crew or supplies.

Harbor Commission Chairman Michael deAngeli told the *Jamestown Press* that “the proposal has been on our wish list for quite a while. We’re well aware that it’s an eyesore, but we have funding constraints, obviously, and there’s a question of how many projects you can do at once. That said, I think it’s a great idea, and I’m very glad that Bill wants to champion the project.”

Referring to commission discussions on the Charrette drawing, deAngeli noted that “what we thought was that maybe we could improve access to the touch-and-go dock if we move it so that it comes off the peninsula, parallel to the wood-pile pier,



Artist rendering of East Ferry pier improvements.

and then you could get boats in on either side of it. [Commission member] Bob Bowen, who is our point man on facilities issues, will prepare some sketches for our next meeting and, if we

agree on the design, our next step would be to send the sketches to [Town Engineer] Mike Gray.”

Once he has the sketches,

See “Pier” on page 19



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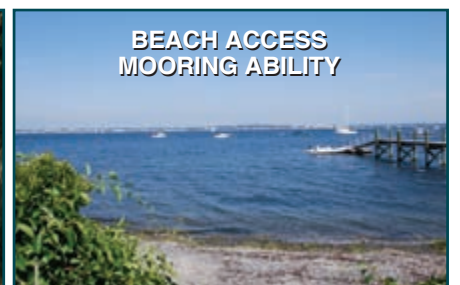
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