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The P.A.C. Pub

138 Narragansett Ave • 423-9909

Council

Continued from page 1

Biologist Numi Mitchell, who authored the proposal and who has gathered a wealth of tracking data on coyote packs on Conanicut and Aquidneck Islands, argued that the ordinance was just a tool for the town to use in “extreme cases.” But Police Chief Thomas Tighe warned that there wouldn’t be any consistency in such discretion.

“This officer might say, ‘Don’t do it again,’ and another officer might say, ‘You’ll have to go to court.’ I run into this all the time,” he said.

Council member Barbara Szeptowski agreed, saying, “I am totally against this. It is absolutely insane to say the police should have discretion. And telling people to sweep up under their bird feeders won’t work. There’s so much in this that’s against the way we live in this town.”

Although the draft ordinance was unanimously voted down, most council members felt that the next council should explore educational opportunities, including the use of Mitchell’s coyote management plan, which has been endorsed by the Department of Environmental Management. Town Administrator Bruce Keiser

suggested providing a link to coyote information on the town’s website.

The council also acted just as decisively on a proposal for future school bus storage. The proposal was presented by school committee member William ‘Bucky’ Brennan, whose overhead slides presented all the pros and cons of three sites: the Lawn Avenue and Melrose Avenue Schools, and a site beside the soccer field on Eldred Avenue.

Brennan said the school committee favored the Eldred Avenue site as “a good solution” because the road is lightly traveled; there wouldn’t be any neighbors to annoy with a convoy of buses or the noise from their engines; buses could easily turn around at the end of the cul-de-sac; and the site offers ample space for 10 buses and any overflow parking from the soccer field.

But council members raised a number of issues with Eldred Avenue, most of them environmental in nature. Sutton said that the buses would be parked in the middle of a long-planned greenway, and that the site would be adjacent to a proposed bicycle path. Another issue is potential vandalism – Tighe said he would need some time to assess that risk.

Keiser said that in his discus-

sions with council members, it was pointed out that Eldred Avenue ends in a wetlands area, raising the possibility of engine fluids running off into protected land. He also said there were “mats available that might help” soak up any fluids, adding that although it is critical to address the need, he didn’t know if it was technically feasible to prevent the runoff.

“At the same time, I don’t know if any of the issues are of such a compelling nature that we should rule out the site,” he said.

It turned out, however, that they were – at least for now.

After briefly discussing other potential sites, the council voted to conditionally select 44 Southwest Ave. – the site of the former town hall. School Superintendent Marcia Lukon had said that it was urgent to search for a storage site, and, as Council member Bill Kelly said, “We can at least temporarily solve the problem by putting the buses at Southwest Avenue, contingent upon the approval of the fire department, the police department and the town administrator.”

Lukon accepted the idea, adding that she would like the next council to study alternative sites if the newly envisioned bus storage at Southwest Avenue “goes away for some reason” – such as the site’s long-awaited sale.

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