

Island Opinion

• EDITORIAL •

New Town Council faces a rocky road

We will all be watching next week as a new Town Council is sworn in, starting a three-year term of governing our island.

The first order of business will be the selection of a new council president and vice president. Then, council members will have to roll up their sleeves and get to work. The new council is fortunate that the town is in pretty good shape. Two of the biggest stumbling blocks in recent years have been resolved – the construction of the new town hall and the public works facility.

But the road ahead could be rocky. Here's what we see facing this council:

- A tighter municipal budget. The state of Rhode Island economic forecast is gloomy and becoming bleaker each day. We can expect what little state revenue sharing there is for the town and schools to evaporate next year. The new council will have to figure out how to maintain services without drastic tax hikes. Is another zero percent increase town budget even possible at this point?

- Signed on the dotted line. Labor contract negotiations will be a major detail on the next council's agenda. Municipal department heads saw their pay frozen in the current budget. Union locals will be asked to shoulder their fair share of the recession hurt.

- Free electricity. We've been talking and studying municipal windmills for some time now. This council will have to decide if we should build a wind turbine and in whose backyard. Then, the council will have to decide how to pay the bill.

- To sell or not to sell. The former highway garage at Ft. Wetherill is prime real estate that should be developed by the town or sold to the highest bidders. The new council will have to decide what to do with that property and also dispose of the former town office property on Southwest Avenue.

- A plan for Ft. Getty. There are many possibilities for expanding the local use of the town jewel. Surely we can scale back the campground and develop other revenue streams at the park so that islanders can take full advantage of the waterfront playground.

- No more Band-Aids. It's time to fix the ailing municipal water and sewer utility. Drastic rate hikes may be in store for those who have town water. Will this council be able to keep the utility afloat?

Of course, Jamestown voters will be available to share their opinions on all these issues and more.

— Jeff McDonough



"RACCOON DAYCARE CENTER"

Unsigned letter a new low

I know that Jamestown has changed a great deal since I first came to the island 60 or more years ago.

Sad to say it has sunk to a new low – when some lowlife distributes untruths – slanderous and very objectionable, and when people have to hide behind masks and unsigned letters, something is wrong. With all these letters delivered, someone had to see this person or persons.

Arthur J. Christman
Jamestown

Watson fundraiser a huge success

I would like to thank everyone who attended and contributed to the concert on Nov. 6 for the Sergeant Wat-

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son Medical Fund. Detective Sergeant Frank Watson is currently battling non-hodgkin's lymphoma. The support from the community has been overwhelming!

I would like to especially thank Tony Murgo, general manager of The Dockside, for providing us with the venue for our event. The Dockside is only open during the summer. They opened the building and brought in staff for our event at no cost to us! Also, the building isn't insulated and there is no heating system. The Newport Tent Company donated two industrial heaters and the fuel to run them for the night. Our grand prize for the raffle was

purchased by our local police union, but it was given to us at dealer cost and home delivery was provided by Flint Audio Video in Middletown.

We had five great bands on Friday night that were comprised in whole or in part by police officers and firefighters from around R.I. Thanks to Kickback (Bristol PD), The Bad Lieutenants (Newport Fire), Garda (R.I. State Police), Ten-8 (Newport Police) and Those Guys (Warwick Fire) for providing some great entertainment. Between the sale of admission tickets, raffle tickets and donations, we have raised \$15,000!

The raffle was a huge

success, thanks to all the local businesses that donated prizes. Thanks to Flint Audio Video (Middletown), Don's Mower Service (N.K.), Conanicut Marine, Smith Optics, The Capital Grille (Providence), Ocean Essence Spa, Cathryn Jamieson Salon, Newport Harbor Hotel & Marina, Secret Garden, Trattoria Simpatico, Bay Voyage, Grapes & Gourmet, Tricia's TropiGrille, Cowesett Inn (West Warwick), Slice of Heaven, Jamestown Hardware, Oyster Bar, Jamestown Wine & Spirits, Picture Perfect Studios (Newport), Pour Judgement (Newport), East Ferry Deli, House of Pizza, Chopmist Charlie's, Flowers by Bert & Peg (N.K.), Autotech and the

See "Letters" on page 20

100 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, Nov. 11, 1909

Steamer Conanicut made a special trip this noon, to carry four large loads of hay to Newport, the inspection service laws forbidding the carrying of loose hay for the regular trips or when passengers are on board.

From the Newport Daily News, Nov. 12, 1909

Large quantities of cedar boughs are being shipped across the island from Narragansett to Newport, to be used to protect tender shrubbery on some large estates.

75 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, Nov. 13, 1934

Jamestown Post American Legion Auxiliary, Junior Group of the Auxiliary, Boy Scouts and school children, and Newport Post Legion drum and bugle corps, held their annual Armistice day parade and ceremonies Sunday morning, forming on Conanicus avenue near Shoreby Hill and marched up Narragansett avenue to St. Matthew's Church, where memorial services were held. ... On the stroke of 11 o'clock, the church bell was tolled and a silence of two minutes was observed in memory of the departed comrades of the World War. ... The annual American Legion Armistice ball was held in the grange hall Saturday evening, a large number of the townspeople and many from Newport attending. A memorial service for World War comrades was held at 11 p.m., when the hall was darkened and all stood in silence for two minutes.

50 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, Nov. 12, 1959

The construction of a Newport-Jamestown bridge is greatly enhanced by Connecticut's announced plan to link Rhode Island's Nooseneck Expressway and the Connecticut Turnpike, Francis G. Dwyer of Middletown, chairman of the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Au-



This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden

Week of November 12

The news of 10 and 15 years ago is from the Jamestown Press. The news of 100 years ago came from the collection of the Newport Historical Society.

thority, said yesterday.

25 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, Nov. 13, 1984

The first step in bringing cable television to Jamestown will be taken tonight when representatives from Rollins Cable Co. ask the Town Council for a right-of-way agreement. Rollins General Manager Bernie Buoanno said the agreement allows the company to "attach to all publicly owned poles." The company must obtain a similar agreement with the sate ... as well as a pole-attachment agreement with utility companies. ... Buoanno said the company is looking into two technical approaches to bringing cable television to Jamestown. Rollins could either transmit the cable signal via microwave to a receiver on the island or it could run wiring across the Jamestown Bridge.

From the Newport Daily News, Nov. 14, 1984

The Town Council Tuesday approved purchase of a new AT&T phone system for Town Hall and the town office building. The bid from AT&T of \$5,832 was the lowest of three bids solicited.

The Town Council delayed action on a cable company request for a right-of-way agreement Tuesday until the so-

licitor could examine the document.

From the Newport Daily News, Nov. 17, 1984

The Newport and Mount Hope Bridge traffic counts were higher last month (633,046) than they were during October of 1983 (527,953).

15 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, Nov. 10, 1994

Jamestown will continue to be represented in the General Assembly by Democrats Sen. Teresa Paiva-Weed and state Rep. Mary Levesque. The local voter turnout was about 75 percent of the town's 3,609 registered voters, including 167 absentee ballots.

The new computer lab at the Lawn Avenue school was last week dedicated to the late Robert S. Seelinger, a much-loved Jamestown School teacher for some 21 years.

If you walked to the Conanicut Island Sanctuary trail lately you probably noticed the new wildlife observation platform overlooking the salt marsh. Built by a team of volunteers a few weeks ago, the platform is situated to provide visitors with a panoramic view of the Great Creek salt marsh and surrounding farmland.

10 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, Nov. 10, 1999

"I think the overwhelming consensus of the island is to tear it down," Town Council President David Long said, initiating a discussion Monday night on whether to recommend to the state Department of Transportation that the (Jamestown) bridge be maintained as a bike path. After a lengthy public hearing in October in which not one islander spoke up in favor of DOT Director William Anker's plan to turn it into a pedestrian way, and after receiving a recommendation by the Planning Commission that the bridge come down as originally planned, the Town Council voted 4-0 to throw the idea out.