

Approved As Written 7-20-11
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
June 15, 2011
7:30 PM
Jamestown Town Hall
93 Narragansett Ave.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. and the following members were present:

Michael Swistak – chair Duncan Pendlebury – Vice Chair
Rosemary Enright Michael Smith
Richard Lynn

Not present:

Susan Little
Michael Jacquard

Also present:

Lisa Bryer, AICP – Town Planner
Cynthia Reppe – Planning Assistant

I. Approval of Minutes June 1, 2011

A motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Enright to accept the minutes as written.
So unanimously voted.

II. Correspondence

1. CRMC – Mark Goerner – Meeting Notice - West Passage – Narragansett Bay Watershed – 4.8 acre Oyster aquaculture Longline System - Received
2. FYI – Avalon Holdings Subdivision Correspondence - Received

III. Citizen's Non Agenda Item – nothing at this time

IV. Reports

1. Town Planner's Report
2. Chairpersons report
3. Town Committees
 - a. Harbor
 - b. Buildings and Facilities – continuing to work on report for Country Club
 - c. Affordable Housing Committee
 - d. North Rd. Bike Path Committee
4. Sub Committees

Planning Commission – Chamber of Commerce Joint Workshop

Planning Commission chair Michael Swistak welcomed the Jamestown Chamber members. The last time the Chamber met with the Planning Commission was in 2006. He turned the workshop over to Town Planner Lisa Bryer who had the audience introduce themselves and stated that this would be an interactive workshop.

The Planner addressed the Chamber and the Planning Commission and told them that she would address the Memorandum that she sent out that provided a list of topics to be discussed at this meeting. The first topic is:

1. How is business defined in Jamestown? What types of businesses do we have?

Mr. Petit would like to address home based businesses, in addition to the businesses downtown. They would like a definition of what a home based business is. It is defined by Zoning. Mr. Munger, CMS, said that the marine industry is the largest industry in Jamestown in terms of draw to the island and number of employees.

We need more Bed & Breakfast's said Mr. Petit. Commissioner Swistak said VRBO has a lot of Jamestown listings and could be considered home based businesses.

2. What are Jamestown's assets related to business? Ie: History, Small town, waterfront. Some of the assets that we have in Jamestown are our waterfront and water access, marina's/moorings, quaint downtown community and its people, restaurants, nature-wildlife, farms/agriculture, sidewalks, library, playground, churches/houses of worship, schools, state parks, safe community, golf course, summer season, easily accessible from bridges, the welcome to Jamestown sign.

Commissioner Pendlebury asked how much of Jamestown's core business relies on people coming from the outside? Other than the tourists Jamestown does have a few businesses that attract people from off island.

Chris Trocki said her favorite aspect is the camaraderie of the other business owners and the people themselves. The community is there to help support her and her business is based on word of mouth (supportive). Bill Munger said the 4 boatyards collectively employ about 100 people. 30% of the customers are Jamestowners. Computer related businesses are very big in Jamestown. Other businesses assist the residences of Jamestown.

3. What are Jamestown's obstacles or threats related to business success?

Obstacles – parking (perceived, level of service), cost of health insurance, narrow streets, no alleys, not golf cart friendly, condition of roads, commercial water rates are higher than residential rates, limited bus service, high real estate values, lack of community support for tourism, small population, seasonal economy, lack of lodging, on line purchasing, rent costs, small customer base.

A discussion ensued regarding the parking issue. Bill Munger suggested we use golf carts downtown. Parking those head to toe takes up much less space. There are many places to park on

Narragansett Ave. most people just prefer to park directly in front of the business they are going to and do not want to walk.

Is there a happy medium to have businesses and residents happy. How do we keep our small town rural character and have healthy thriving businesses in Jamestown? Seasonal economy seems to be the biggest obstacle for most downtown businesses. Is there a way to draw people over the bridge to Jamestown in the off season?

4. Is there concern or need for business retention? Expansion? Or Recruitment?

Mostly retention. Some may want expansion.

5. What is the market of a Jamestown Business; who uses it?

Mostly Jamestowners. A comments was made about the limited hours of operation of some of the businesses. There is a small customer base but it is strong. The restaurants and the marine industries draw outsiders to the island.

6. What will the market support; Is a detailed market analysis necessary?

They did not feel that that was necessary.

7. What is Jamestown's identity? Do we need to be branded? Marketing and Promotion?

Jamestown's identity is restaurants, waterfront and daytrippers visiting the state parks and the waterfront.

8. How can the Town help the businesses? They would like to meet again.

9. How can the Chamber help the businesses? Nothing was suggested.

10. What is the main goal of an economic development plan – No discussion in this regard.

11. Do you feel a specific plan is necessary and can we agree to be partners?

The Chamber members would like to see expanding chamber participation and further discussion such as this, they would like annual meetings with the Planning Commission, They felt that an economic development committee may be helpful and would provide a forum for continual meetings and may help our Jamestown businesses.

V. Old Business – nothing at this time

VI. New Business – nothing at this time

A motion to adjourn at 9:25 p.m. was made by Commissioner Enright and seconded by Commissioner Lynn. So unanimously voted.

Attest:



Cynthia L. Reppe

Planning Assistant

This meeting was digitally recorded