

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

January 12, 2009

A work session of the Jamestown Town Council was called to order at the Jamestown Town Hall in the Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers at 93 Narragansett Avenue at 6:34 p.m. by Council President Julio J. DiGiando, for the purpose of discussing plans for the future use of the highway barn at Fort Wetherill. The following members were present:

Michael White, Vice-President
William Kelly (6:55p.m.)
Robert W. Sutton, Jr.

absent: Barbara Szepatowski

also present:

Bruce R. Keiser, Town Administrator
Heather R. Lopes, Deputy Town Clerk Pro Tem
Michael Sullivan, DEM Representative
Lisa Bryer, Town Planner

Lisa Bryer stated she had notified all the pertinent Boards & Committees of tonight's work session. An overview of the power-point presentation from the October 20, 2008 meeting was given by Bruce Keiser, Town Administrator. The site totals approximately 3.6 acres, has town water but no town sewer or approved ISDS.

6:50 p.m. Council President opened to public comment. The following residents spoke:

Philip Larson of Melrose Ave presented a packet to the Council with details of turning the building into a shellfish farm/hatchery. Included in the packet was a tentative floor plan with the option for a second floor. Mr. Larson suggested the possibility of collaboration with local higher education facilities for education/training in aquaculture and shellfish growth. There is also, the possibility of hosting events with educational benefits. Mr. Larson does not believe a hatchery would interfere with the boat slips currently at this location and the town could remain owner of the property with a lease agreement. He's unsure of the exact impact of traffic but believes there would only be a small number of students and transportation of the products from the hatchery could fit in a car trunk or small truck. Mr. Larson stated Rhode Island does not have sufficient hatcheries for local fisherman and a great amount of money is sent out of state for the seed required to grow shellfish.

Arthur Milot, Bill Munger, Chris Powell, Jerry McIntyre, and Owen McEntee of Grinnell St all spoke against a restaurant/hall being placed at this location.

Arthur Milot, Bill Munger, Chris Powell, Jerry McIntyre, Mr. Perry of Matunuck Oyster Farm, Dave Pritchard, Ann Hines, and Bill Geib all had comments in favor of a hatchery.

Steve Garnett and Susan Little had concerns with the level of traffic.
Susan Little had concerns on economic benefits and the riparian rights of the boat owners at this location.

Arthur Christman commented on the building having been condemned years ago and the remediation cost would be tremendous.

Frank Meyer read correspondence with figures of the profitable Narragansett Towers as a comparison for a wedding hall. He also stated the rates charged by a resort would be very high and profitable due to the location and views. Mr. Meyer does not believe the renovation costs could be financially assumed by the residents.

Public Comment closed at 7:43 p.m.

Councilman Sutton asked Mike Sullivan if there could be a shared component with DEM and shellfish growers. Mr. Sullivan stated there has been collaboration between growers and DEM in the past.

Councilman White stated the shellfish farm is an interesting proposal and believes the town should retain the land. He also stated a restaurant/hall type business could be disruptive to a lot of people.

Council President DiGiando stated this would be an agenda item in the future. He also stated cost information is needed regarding a shellfish farm and a water dependent operation would be a good decision.

Councilman Kelly is opposed to any kind of intrusive operation. He believes a restaurant/hall couldn't operate in this location due to the lack of sewer system to handle the demand. Councilman Kelly asked how this would affect the Fort Wetherill Boat Owners Association (FWBOA) as they have a lease agreement with the town. He agrees a water dependent use would be best.

Mr. Keiser stated the FWBOA lease is on the next Council Agenda for completion.

Councilman Sutton believes collaboration with state and local agencies could have a good economic value in construction and with a continuing economic value. He also stated he's not sure if there is any value in subdividing the site.

The work session adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Attest:

Heather R. Lopes
Deputy Town Clerk Pro Tem

c: Town Council Members (5)
Town Administrator
Town Solicitor
Administrative Circulation