

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

June 22, 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 6:00 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
Robert W. Sutton, Jr.
Barbara Szepatowski

also present:

Bruce R. Keiser, Town Administrator
Arlene D. Petit Town Clerk

Council President DiGiando reviewed the three proposals received in answer to the advertisement to a Request for Proposals for the reuse of Fort Wetherill; those being:

1. Conanicut Marine Services, Inc. (three proposals)
Proposal I – purchase price for land and building on Town lot 145 of \$2,700,000
Proposal II – for land and building on Town lot B \$1,500,000
Proposal III – land only, Town lot A \$1,100,000 plus annual taxes on the assess value; Town would retain ownership of Lot B but would support CMS in the process to construct a boat ramp for public use
2. JAM (Jamestown Aquaculture Movement)
Oyster restoration in Narragansett Bay (commercial hatchery for local oyster spat); one-stop shopping center for new growers in creating a sustainable shellfish farm; with education component. Town to maintain ownership with a net/net lease with JAM. Some renovation to be required by Town.
3. Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Consolidate its aquaculture/restoration shellfish operations to the Fort Wetherill site. Vessel maintenance and research outfitting operations for marine fleet to be centralized in the balance of the building. Would allow public to see and learn more regarding operations of DEM Marine. RIDEM would be interested in a land swap for State-owned property.

The Council discussed their intent in keeping Fort Wetherill a marine based facility with minimal neighborhood impacts.

The Town Administrator noted that all of the interested parties have agreed that there is the possibility of partnering in the reuse of Fort Wetherill. In addition, all parties have an interest in a deep water boat ramp.

Councilor Szepatowski suggested that the Jamestown voters should make the decision as to whether the Fort Wetherill property should be sold or retained; and if retained, how the property is used and by whom.

Councilor Sutton gave a brief history of the town's acquisition of the property and stated that since 1991 the town-owned property is without any restrictions or covenants with the exception of the Jamestown Zoning Ordinance and state CRMC regulations.

The Council discussed the importance of maintaining riparian rights to the Fort Wetherill property.

The Council had a lengthy discussion as to whether the property should be leased, sold, subdivided or any combination of the above. In addition, the Council discussed the costs associated with any renovation project for the building and area, including a new sewer line.

It was the consensus of the Council to ask the three interested parties to resubmit their bids, giving greater detail on creating a deep water boat ramp, and to have the Town Administrator meet with each party to work out the feasibility of combined usage.

Several residents were in attendance and were invited to speak:

Christopher Powell, Conservation Commission Chair

Frank Meyer, Southwest Avenue

Joseph Medeiros, Fort Wetherill Boat Owners Association

Robert Bowen, Jamestown Harbor Commission

Richard Colasanto, North Main Road

Phillip Larson, Jamestown Aquaculture Movement (JAM)

William Munger, Conanicut Marine Services, Inc.

Judith DiBello, Spirketing Street

Council President DiGiando stated that continued efforts should be accomplished through the coordinated efforts of the Town Administrator.

The work session adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Attest:

Arlene D. Petit

Town Clerk

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