

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MAY 27, 2008

A work session of the Jamestown Town Council was called to order at the Jamestown Town Hall, 93 Narragansett Avenue at 6:00 p.m. by Council President Julio J. DiGiando, for the purpose of exploring the need for an animal shelter to be located in the Town of Jamestown. The following members were present:

Michael G. White, Vice President
William A. Kelly
Barbara A. Szepatowski

absent: Robert W. Sutton, Jr.

also present:

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

present for: Paws and Claws: Councilor Szepatowski
Friends of the Jamestown
Animal Shelter: Audience members
8th Grade Class: Maureen McGuirl, Teacher
Students: Shane Farrelly
Daniel Bailey
Ellen Bednarczyk
Sarah Smith
Ivy Burns
Shay Reilly
Sydney Keen
Nicole Perez
Ryan Rosa
Charlie Wooley
Danielle Jennings
Shannon Sheeky
Daniel Gorelick

Councilor Szepatowski introduced Maureen McGuirl, 8th Grade Class Teacher at Lawn School. Ms. McGuirl explained that as an 8th grade graduating project members of her class collected data in order to conduct a needs assessment on locating an animal shelter in Jamestown. This project was presented to a statewide panel and students were judged on their proficiency and ability to present a problem and follow it through to a conclusion or solution.

Three groups of 8th graders collaborated to investigate whether there was a need for an animal shelter in Jamestown. A presentation was made using a storyboard with each student offering a prepared statement to indicate their findings.

Overall there was thought to be a need for an animal shelter. It would not be necessary to hire additional Town staff because of the volunteer network available to work and provide the necessary food and supplies.

Following the student presentation, Councilor Szepatowski summarized her concerns regarding the inability of Jamestown to house and care for lost or abandoned animals in our community. Councilor Szepatowski indicated that although Jamestown has transported animals to the North Kingstown Animal Shelter or to the privately owned Robert Potter League in Middletown, space cannot be guaranteed.

Councilor Szepatowski identified the old water treatment plant building as a location to be considered and noted that several individuals working with island nature projects have shown an interest in incorporating the use of the building as a nature center. The use of this building would allow for an animal shelter as well as an area to provide a center dedicated to education and respect for all animals. All renovation work would be done by a group of volunteers already in place and waiting for the selection of a location.

Councilor Szepatowski asked that the Council consider a ten (10) year lease for the old water treatment plant building. A long-term lease would show the commitment to the project and would encourage grant funding from Rhode Island Foundation, the Champlain Fund, RISPCA, and private donations. The only cost to the taxpayers would be the cost of the lease.

Councilor Szepatowski suggested that the Town contract with North Kingstown to use their animal shelter until the Council could make a decision.

The work session adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Attest:

Arlene D. Petit
Town Clerk

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