**TOWN COUNCIL/SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL GRANT/FORT WETHERILL**

**WORK SHOP**

**October 25, 2010**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The workshop for the Jamestown Town Council to discuss Safe Routes to School Grant and Fort Wetherill was called to order at 6:35 p.m. in the Jamestown Town Jamestown Town Hall Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers at 93 Narragansett Avenue.

Hall RRo

1. **ROLL CALL**

Town Council members present:

Michael Schnack, President

Robert Bowen, Vice President

William H. Murphy

Michael G. White

Ellen M. Winsor

Also present:

Bruce R. Keiser, Town Administrator

Lisa Bryer, Town Planner

Cheryl A. Fernstrom, Town Clerk

1. **SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL GRANT**

Town Planner Lisa Bryer gives a PowerPoint report to inform the Council of the School Land Use Plan, safe routes to school funding and Native American history relative to Jamestown. With significant Native American history dating back 5,000 years, the Jamestown Archaeological District became part of the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. Referred to as the West Ferry archaeology site, it is the largest documented Indian cemetery in New England, and is located within the Jamestown School campus (Melrose and Lawn Schools). In 2005 the bicycle advocacy group, Rolling Agenda, identified barriers to children traveling to school and proposed development of a school land use plan. Numerous stakeholders signed on to the process, and Jamestown received a total of $455,250 in grant funding from the RI Safe Routes to School Grant Fund.

On June 16, 2008 the Narragansett Indian Tribe requested Tribe and Town Protocols, and the Jamestown School Grounds and Neighborhood final report was approved by the Town Council on June 23, 2008. In January 2009 the State Archaeologist reviewed the School Land Use Plan and made recommendations to:

* identify the Town’s responsibility under State law (RIGL §23-18-10.1);
* clarify that federally funded projects are subject to SHPO and NITHPO review (Sec. 106 National Historic Preservation Act);
* RIHPA (RIGL §42-45) review is required for State funded projects;
* commit the Town to develop procedures and protocols for evaluating impacts of ground disturbances on Narragansett Indian archaeological sites.

In January 2009 the Deputy State HPO recommended:

* maintaining existing uses without new ground disturbances was acceptable;
* new ground disturbances were prohibited in burial areas;
* new ground disturbances require testing to see if burials are present;
* filling in areas requires testing to determine if burials are present;
* filling over known burials requires consultation with NITHPO and RIHPHC;
* non-burial areas be preserved in place or evaluated to determine if they contribute to the significance of the Jamestown Archaeological District.

RIDOT granted permission in winter, 2009 to proceed to bid for engineering and archaeological services, for phase 1 of the Safe Routes to School funding. The bid was awarded to Crossman Engineering and PAL in December 2009 and work commenced in 2010. In July 2010 the preliminary design and protocols were discussed with RIHPHC. To date the Tribe remains unwilling to discuss the project until construction review and protocols are developed with agreement by RIHPHC and RIDOT.

Ms. Bryer outlined next steps as:

* review applicable documents;
* schedule future meeting with the Council to review RIHPHC recommendations;
* schedule future discussion of potential three-party agreement between the Town, State and Narragansett Indian Tribe.

Lisa wanted to bring this important information to the Council for an update. The map outlining the Jamestown Archaeological District and the Archaeological Resources in Jamestown were referenced. Allen Leveillee of PAL (Public Archaeology Laboratory) has completed the Cultural Resource Evaluation for the first phase of the project. Lisa recommends that the information discussed be reviewed prior to any future meetings with PAL, the Narragansett Tribe, and other groups involved in the project. The Town Council thanked Planner Bryer for her research and report.

1. **FORT WETHERILL**

The Fort Wetherill property appraisal performed by George Valentine of Newport Appraisal Group was referenced. This is a 3.78 acre piece of land located in the Public District and described as Plat 10 Lot 145, located at 1 Fort Wetherill Road, and valued at $2,240,000. It was appraised as having the potential to be subdivided into two lots to realize the properties highest and best use. Proposed Parcel A is the upland portion containing 80,000 square feet and is proposed to be rezoned to RR80, with the assumption it can support development with a four bedroom single-family residence, to bring asset value back to the town. Proposed Parcel B, which is 84,468 square feet, is encumbered by a lease with the Fort Wetherill Boat Owner’s Association (42-slip marina) to 2015. It is the waterfront portion of the property and includes the former Highway Barn (5,000 square foot Navy mine storage building). RIDEM is interested in the property as part of their marine fisheries division. There was discussion of approaching the URI School of Oceanography to see if they have a potential use for the Fort Wetherill site. The former Highway Barn needs to be assessed for potential sale and return on investment. This is an historic building requiring numerous repairs. It is unknown if the $25,000 lease payment for the marina is equal to its market value. Discussion followed regarding adjacent properties, joining parcels and possible land swap. Town-owned parcels in Jamestown Shores were referenced for possible sale to finance land purchases.

Council members express the opinions once the property is sold, the town will never get it back; we need to keep and preserve it; we shouldn’t sell it; maybe the other lot should be sold; there is more value in keeping it than selling it; Parcel A is valuable to the town; the lease amount should be increased; the best use for Parcel B would be realized by selling it; if Parcel A were sold there is no right of way to the basin; the basin is not available for sale or lease; RIDEM is interested in the property; and Parcel A is not valuable to the town. There was discussion of potential uses, including an amphitheater on Parcel A, a park, and cost issues associated with maintaining the road. The comparable sales used in the appraisal are not as high as they should be. Can the septic system there be used and can the town find another storage area on the island?

Public Comment was invited.

Phil Zahodiakin asks if CRMC would determine the Kilroy lot as unbuildable. The Zoning Board of Review determined this was a substandard lot.

Joe Medeiros thanked the Council for this opportunity. Fort Wetherill is a lovely area, and the basin does not belong to the town. The neighborhood has gripes with RIDEM and knows what they want to do there. He believes the buildings should be kept the way they are, and there is good access for boats.

Owen McEntee stated the property should not be sold under any circumstances.

Jerry Scott commented that most of the boat slips come off the property by the Highway Barn, and there should be a written arrangement with RIDEM to give boat owners access.

Sam Patterson stated it was a good deal when the property was acquired from the Federal government, and the structure must stay the same.

Hank Meyer stated the property was paid for by the taxpayers, and they want access to the waterfront. The 2008 workshop and report were referenced. The study results and the wishes of the people were disregarded.

John Santilli commented on the Highway Barn, the buildings needed renovations and restrictions, and inquired whether an RFP could be prepared for them.

There is no updated information on potential aquaculture for that area. A proposed JAM/RIDEM venture/partnership was referenced.

Walter Schroeder and Bruce Livingston will be contacted, and discussion will be continued to another meeting.

Joe Texeira asked how the State can pay for rent.

The Town Council commented there is a lot of information to review. Town Administrator will research this information and report back to the Council.

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the workshop was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Attest:

Cheryl A. Fernstrom, CMC, Town Clerk

Copies to: Town Council (5)

Town Administrator

Town Solicitor