

Ft. Getty Master Plan



Committee Members:

Mary Meagher, Chair, Resident at Large
Pat Bolger, Conservation Commission
Matt Bolles, Parks and Recreation Director
Lisa Bryer, Town Planner
Dick Condon/James Archibald, Harbor Management Commission
Betty Hubbard, Planning Commission
William Marsh, Buildings and Facilities Committee

With assistance from:

Ashley Hahn, Planning Intern

Approved by Ft. Getty Committee May 5, 2005
Approved by Town Council May 9, 2005

Executive Summary

In 1994, the original Fort Getty Master Plan was written by the Fort Getty Re-use Committee as part of an investigation of the best way to manage the campground at Fort Getty park. In 2004, although the campground is a major element in our discussion of the park, it is not the primary emphasis. In public forums and a citizen survey, Jamestown residents have expressed an interest in the park beyond its revenue generating capacities. In addition, as the Comprehensive Plan reports, Jamestown's growing population possesses an equally growing demand for water based amenities and facilities for which Fort Getty park is ideally suited. In the 2004 Fort Getty Master Plan, our first goal is to **improve residents' use of the park**. Our second goal indicates the way to do so: by **developing additional (and improving the existing) water dependent and water enhanced active and passive recreational opportunities at the park**. And our last goal suggests the means by which such goals are accomplished: **ensure revenues**.

Our primary recommendation emerges from our third goal. **It is essential to develop a fund for Fort Getty dedicated to capital improvements and repairs at the park**. This fund can be developed from a portion of the revenues the park generates, and we describe how this can be accomplished at no loss to the Town's general fund. Our second recommendation calls for **a continuing Fort Getty Committee** to work with the Parks and Recreation Department, the Harbor Commission and other groups to coordinate improvements and their management. An in depth review and analysis of the uses of the facility and of their physical organization at the park, by people who are trained for the task, is our third recommendation. To ensure the compatibility of all of the activities that take place at the park, and to accommodate their expansion, alteration or the introduction of new activities, **a land use plan** should be developed that clarifies the uses and organizes the facilities that support them, including structures, parking, access and landscape. Additional recommendations describe the specific **capital improvements** and programs that will promote increased resident use. The final recommendations relate to the **organization of uses and management practices** at the park.

Introduction

In the spring of 2004, at the urging of then Town Administrator, Maryanne Crawford and Parks and Recreation Director, Matthew Bolles, Jamestown's Town Council established a committee to update the Master Plan for Fort Getty, originally written by the Fort Getty Re-use Committee in 1994. This plan contains long-term recommendations for use and management of Ft. Getty, the only waterfront park owned by the town of Jamestown. The council also appointed Parks and Recreation Director Bolles, who had chaired the 1994 committee, and Town Planner Lisa Bryer. Volunteers representing other town committees were also included: Betty Hubbard from the Planning Commission, Dick Condon from Harbor Management, Pat Bolger from the Conservation commission, and Bill Marsh from the Building and Facilities committee. I was appointed by the council to the seventh slot on the committee, as a "resident at large."

The 2004 Fort Getty Committee first met on April 15, 2004 and then every two weeks for 16 meetings through October. Planning intern and Jamestown resident, Ashley Hahn assisted the committee through the summer, tabulating surveys and developing a first draft of the report. After an interlude to allow Lisa Bryer to develop the report, the committee began to meet again in December and approved this report on May 3, 2005 for presentation to the Town Council on May 9, 2005.

Our committee began its efforts by reviewing the 1994 Master Plan, touring Fort Getty as a group and individually, and gathering information relevant to the park. Betty Hubbard met with representatives from Jamestown's Historical Society and local historian Walter Schroder and reported on the Fort's history and current status as an historical artifact. Matt Bolles reviewed the management and current use of the park, as well as its revenues, requirements and costs, including water and utilities. Pat Bolger investigated the impact of Fort Getty visitors on town businesses. He also tracked down deeds, minutes of council meetings and other documents and information relevant to the town's use of the park. The plans of the Harbor Commission for the Dutch Harbor Mooring field and Fort Getty were outlined by Dick Condon. As a long time RV camper, Dick also provided insight into the requirements of such use of the park. Bill Marsh brought the experience and history of a longtime resident and Fire Department volunteer to the committee. He also spent a week in the summer camping there, and so provided an "insider's" point of view about the workings of the place. Betty Hubbard, a landscape architect herself, toured the park with other landscape architects to get additional perspectives as to its use. A public forum held on June 10, 2004 provided residents and campers an opportunity to voice opinions on future use of the park. Believing that more specific input was needed from Jamestown residents, Lisa Bryer and intern Ashley Hahn, conducted and tabulated a survey to postal patrons of the Jamestown Press regarding general park conditions and residents' use of Fort Getty. In December, when Dick Condon could no longer attend our meetings, Jim Archibald, current chair of the Harbor Management Commission, took his place. Jim not only served as a conduit between the committees, but also brought a wealth of expertise from his work in the marina and boating industry.

The Committee took particular note of changes to the community since 1994, particularly the 20% growth in population and an increased demand for water dependent resources and facilities and recreational programs for children and adults. We reviewed the

current and proposed efforts by the Harbor Management Commission and Recreation Department to satisfy these demands. Lisa Bryer developed an additional survey for the families of Jamestown School's students, grades K through 6 regarding summer camp needs. Pat Bolger examined the significance of Fort Getty revenues in the 1994 and 2004 town budgets, and determined the current impact of Fort Getty revenues on the taxpayer.

Simultaneously, the committee developed a list of all possible uses that might be accommodated at Fort Getty while being mindful of the recommendation of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan "to increase resident use at Ft. Getty". Possible uses, including existing ones, were assessed in terms of their appropriateness for the landscape and resources of Fort Getty, their compatibility with other uses, their requirements in terms of management and staffing, and their cost and potential revenues.

These efforts resulted in the committee developing new goals for Fort Getty.

Goal I *Upgrade park facilities and amenities, which will enhance the appeal of the park for residents and other visitors*

Goal II *Develop additional water dependent and water enhanced active and passive recreational opportunities for residents*

Goal III *Maintain positive financial revenues from current and future uses at Fort Getty that will be available for park maintenance and improvements*

These goals differ from those presented in 1994. We believe they are reflective of the changes that have occurred in Jamestown in those ten years and the opportunities that Fort Getty Park represents. In light of these goals and after extended discussion of the problems and opportunities presented by the park, which are described in the report, the committee developed a series of recommendations that are clearly delineated in the action plan. Thanks to Pat Bolger, who did yeoman's work in researching and reviewing our efforts, we also have provided estimated costs and time frames for most of our recommendations.

Fort Getty is a jewel among the many jewels on Conanicut Island. But as the only waterfront park that the town owns, the opportunities presented by the park are numerous and somewhat daunting. As we have witnessed the seasonal and year round population of Jamestown grow, the impact on the town's resources and facilities has also grown. We hope this report will help our community develop plans for Fort Getty that not only enhance citizen's use of the park, as the Town's Comprehensive Plan recommends, but also protect the extraordinary resources that Fort Getty, Fox Hill, and Narragansett Bay provide.

Mary Meagher,
Chair, 2004 Fort Getty Master Plan Committee

Chapter 1

Fort Getty: History and Current Conditions

Fort Getty Park is located on a small peninsula on the west side of Conanicut Island known as Fox Hill. The peninsula is bounded by the west passage of Narragansett Bay to its south, west and north, and Fox Hill pond to the east. In all directions there are extraordinary views of the bay and its environs: south to Beavertail and across the mouth of the bay to Narragansett, across the west passage to Bonnet Shores and the URI Bay Campus and north to Dutch Island, Hodgkiss Farm and Quonset Point. To the southeast is the Fox Hill salt marsh, a conservation area under the protection of the Audubon Society, and the pastures of Fox Hill Farm. To the east, across Sheffield Cove, are Jamestown's West Ferry and Dutch Harbor Marina.

Access to Fort Getty is from Beavertail Road, westward along **Fort Getty Road**, two



View of Ft. Getty from the West Passage of Narragansett Bay. Dutch Island Lighthouse in foreground.

roadways of asphalt pavement in a right of way that is approximately 60 feet wide. The north roadway is 17 feet wide, the south 19 feet wide and they are separated by a 10 foot wide stretch of grass on which are located a string of utility poles that deliver electricity to the park. Fort Getty Road runs between two of Jamestown's working farms, Fox Hill Farm to the north of the road and Beaverhead Farm to the south. In addition to the two farm parcels, there are 7 other residential lots in this area. Currently, there are 7 year round or seasonal residences that are the park's closest neighbors.

Fort Getty Road leads to a **gatehouse**, constructed by the federal government prior to the town's ownership. To the south of the gatehouse is a **5.4 acre parcel** that belongs to the park known as the "hospital area" for the hospital built there during World War II. This area is essentially undeveloped except for a pumpout station for RV's and a septic field that dates to the hospital era. The road becomes a single wide stretch of pavement as it passes through a stone gate and over a narrow isthmus to lead past the pavilion to what is thought of as the park area.

There are two sand and cobble **beaches** within the park's 41 acres, one near the entrance to the park, which faces south and captures the prevailing southwest breezes, and another at the north end of the park which faces west. Also at the north end of the park is a **long wooden pier**, constructed to withstand the weight of military vehicles, a causeway and, facing east, a **boat ramp**. What was called Fox Hill, and now is the green space that is the park, rises from the beaches at the south and north and the salt marsh to the east, up about 30 feet in elevation. Much of the park is at a 10 and then 5 degree slope facing east and north. The hill flattens creating a plateau of about 10 acres, ending in a coastal bluff that faces westward.

Fortifications

Originally used for agriculture, the waterfront hill of approximately 31 acres served as an outpost for both colonists and the British to monitor ship movements in Narragansett Bay during the Revolutionary war period. The hill was purchased by the federal government in 1900 for military purposes as part of the “Endicott Period” (1888 – 1906) string of fortifications that protected the mouth of Narragansett Bay. Construction began the following year on a number of concrete fortifications and in 1903 the reservation was named for Colonel George Getty, who had served with distinction in the Mexican War and Civil War. A garrison was first established on the site in 1909. The fort was more or less an outpost supporting Fort Kearney on the mainland during World War I. It was during this period that the causeway and dock were constructed on the northern shore. Maps from the 1930’s show three batteries: Battery Whiting at the south beach and Battery House and Battery Toussard on the hill.

In 1940, the 243rd Coast Artillery Unit moved to newly constructed barracks at Fort Getty from Fort Adams and more land was purchased or taken by the government with the onset of World War II. “ The regiment at that time established its headquarters at the fort, set up a regimental motor pool and assigned the Medical Detachment and Band to this site,” (Walter Schroder , Defenses of Narragansett Bay in World War II, p. 23.) During the last months of the war, as the Coast Artillery evacuated the harbor defense installations of Narragansett Bay, Fort Getty played a role in “the most long range and idealistic POW re-education efforts ever undertaken by the United States.” (Schroder, p.114) In mid 1945, the School of Administration and soon thereafter the Army School Center was established at Fort Getty. This was part of an effort to utilize “handpicked Germans to assist military government officials and military police in carrying out their duties in occupied Germany after the war.” (Schroder p.115) At Fort Getty, “the vacant Army Station Hospital that had been built in 1941 was used as an education complex.” (Schroder p.115) The POW students were treated as civilians and security was minimal. Among other activities, the prisoners of war built the stone gate at the entry to the park. By the end of 1945 however, the re-education efforts were reduced and the school at Ft. Getty was closed.

Though much evidence of the fort has been destroyed, there are still a few remnants of the military history of the area. Near the park entrance, **Battery Whiting** looms above the southern beach and is easily visible from the park’s main access road. An extensive concrete pad at the top of the hill covers an elaborate substructure that was the location of **Battery Toussard** and **Battery House**. Partially recessed, the **Battery Commander’s Position** is precisely located on the north south axis near the bluff, overlooking the bay. The roads that shape the current use of the park also date to the military era, with the main access road running northward from the park’s southern entrance to the dock and boat ramp. Smaller roads that now provide access to top of the hill and views from the bluff, once served military structures that have since disappeared. The hospital is no longer, but the septic field that served it is still in use and now serves the campground pumpout station.

Beginning in 1946, Fort Getty was slowly abandoned by the Federal government. By 1955, it was deemed as surplus to the needs of the federal government and was sold to the Town of Jamestown for \$5500, one half of the appraised value of the property. The deed, available in the land evidence records at Town Hall, is interesting in its particulars. Most relevant for our discussion is that for 20 years, the town was required to use and maintain the premises for “public park purposes and for a public recreation area, for incidental purposes

relating thereto but for no other purposes”. Equally interesting is that town council minutes reveal that a year after purchasing the park from the federal government, with the stipulations described above, the town tried to sell the 5.4 acre “hospital area” portion of it. There were no buyers.

Fort Getty Park

Prior to the 1990’s, much of the town’s interventions at Fort Getty consisted of efforts to protect visitors from the hazards of those **fortifications** that still remained. In 1977, the Town undertook to seal the entrances to the old substructure of the **Battery Toussard** and **Battery House** with fill taken from the site of the sewer treatment plant. Later, the Army Corps of Engineers constructed fences at points vulnerable to entry. This was successful to a great extent, although vandals have since reopened a couple of entry points. Impediments were constructed on the wood pile pier to prevent cars from driving on it. A perimeter road that ran adjacent to the coastal bluff near the gun battery was abandoned.



Other parts of the fortifications have been used by the town in somewhat unconventional ways, despite (or perhaps because of) their disintegrated state. For many years the Fire Department has used **Battery Whiting** near the park’s entrance for

training. As such, it is routinely strewn with debris and trash, either before or after burning. Concrete slabs enclosed by foundation walls along the main access road to the ramp and dock are used as **parking lots**, most recently for boat trailers. A small brick building at the east of the major gun battery was briefly a market /concession stand and is now a **bathroom and shower facility**. Two of the Fort’s septic systems are still in use, including the one that served the hospital. Many of the Fort’s roads are still used and have been repaved.

Over the years, the town has also made efforts to create amenities and facilities that would promote recreational use of the park. In the late 1970’s, volunteers built an open air,



covered pavilion 35 feet by 130 feet near the southern beach and named it for Lt. Col. John C. Rembijas, who had served as commander of Fort Burnside at Beavertail during the war and also as Jamestown’s Building Inspector in the 1970’s. The **Rembijas pavilion** has a concrete floor and tables which can accommodate 200 people. Only residents of Jamestown may rent the pavilion on a daily basis for parties, company picnics, and special events.

Currently the daily rental charge is \$200, but at the discretion of the Town Council the fee can be waived for non-profit groups. The pavilion is open to individuals and small informal groups free of charge when it is not reserved. There is a **volleyball field and net** just north of the pavilion and up the hill there is a broad open field that is available for use at any time.

Visitors and residents describe camping at Fort Getty long before the town formally created an **RV campground** in 1976, when records reveal that the town first rented 20 trailer sites for the summer season. The RV campground is located north of the now filled batteries and on the eastern slope, covering about 6 acres. The total number of RV campsites is now 104 in 2005, of which 82 are seasonal sites, rented for use by one RV from Memorial Day through the first weekend of October. The cost for each seasonal site is \$3175 in 2005, an increase of \$625 over the 2004 rate. In 2004, there was a waiting list of 103 for seasonal sites. As of April 25, 2005, the waiting list now stands at 80. 20 sites are described as transient, but of those in 2004, 6 were rented for the entire season, essentially making them more expensive seasonal sites. The transient rate is, in 2005, a daily charge of \$40.

The average RV site is 28' x 60', or 2350 square feet. Campers are restricted to two vehicles in addition to their RV; there are no other designated parking areas for guest or overflow parking. Each site is provided a picnic table, and has 20 amp hook ups for electricity



and another connection for town water. The electric and water connections were upgraded in 1993. Sewer hookups for individual trailers are not provided; a pumpout station is maintained near the gatehouse. Requiring campers to travel to the pumpout facility to dispose of wastewater is a de facto way of encouraging water conservation. In addition, there is a second **bathroom and shower**

facility (one shower for each gender) at the northeast corner of the RV campground, with a leach field to the northeast of it. In 2004, overflow RV's were allowed to park for limited stays near the boat ramp, without access to water or electricity.

Only minimal recreation facilities are available specifically for campers. Picnic tables dot the landscape by the western bluff. For a fee of \$300 for the season, seasonal campers can rent space to park their boats adjacent to the main access road leading to the dock and boat ramp. Campers can take advantage of other amenities offered within the park and at other locations on Conanicut Island.

Currently, 15 **tent camping** sites are also located at the top of the hill, adjacent to the gun battery. The tent camping was highlighted in Newsweek magazine in the summer of 2004 as one of the great recreational bargains to be found in the United States. There are additional bath and shower facilities northeast of the main battery, in the brick building that once was part

of the fort. These facilities are located relatively near the tent area, but some distance from the pavilion which they also serve. All of the bathroom facilities were upgraded in 1994, but show ten years wear and tear. The total number of showers provided is 4, the number of toilets is 13, including a port-a-john near the gatehouse.

Day use of Fort Getty is extensive in the summer, owing largely to the boat ramp, causeway and pier at the park's north end. **The wood-pile pier** was built by the federal government during the military occupation of the area. The pier emerges from the causeway north into the bay and then turns east and widens. Built strong enough to allow cars and trucks to travel on it, the piles and substructure appear to be in good condition still. The deck height above water precludes its use by small boats, and there are currently no attached floats at the water level. The Harbor Management Commission made repairs to the deck in 1995, then commissioned a survey of the structure (both above and below water) in 2002. In 2004, the Commission contracted repairs to the fastening of the outer batter pilings and has plans to invest \$45,000 in the pier over the next three years. In addition to the repairs to the pier, the Commission has appropriated funds for the construction of touch and go floats to the south of the dock that will facilitate recreational boaters' use. This work is scheduled for the summer of 2005.

The pier is also used for **recreational fishing**, but in 2004, the north and south perimeters were rented to two marine exploration vessels limiting its fishing use. Along the east side of the causeway leading to the pier, the Harbor Management Commission maintains 20 **outhauls**. These structures, much like a clothesline, permit in-water boat storage, which is accessible from the shore. The outhauls are available to Jamestown residents for \$300 per year. There is a waiting list of 22 for the Ft Getty outhauls. There is no room to expand this activity because of physical limitations and regulatory constraints. At the south end of the causeway, also facing east is the **boat ramp**. Feeding into the more protected Sheffield Cove, the ramp is in an ideal area, but its specific location makes launching difficult at low tide. Boaters park their cars and trailers by the west beach in a makeshift parking lot that can accommodate about 5 cars and trailers. When that lot is full, boaters park haphazardly along the main access road and on the grass up the hill. The Harbor commission has also earmarked funds to improve the boat ramp within the next five years.



The Harbor Commission is in the process of developing plans for the **reconfiguration of the West Ferry mooring field**, in response to the large waiting list for moorings that has developed, including 70 applicants for West Ferry alone. A new inspection policy will require mooring owners to provide more accurate data as to the location of their moorings, enabling the Harbor Commission to better organize the existing mooring field. It is hoped that this simple reorganization will create space for 20 to 30 additional moorings. This re configuration, as well as the new touch and go docks and proposed improvements to the boat ramp, will obviously prompt more intense use of Fort Getty.

The Harbor Commission is also reviewing a potential **enlargement of the West Ferry mooring field** that could also add moorings to the area. While such an expansion could provide room for as many as 200 moorings, the commission is interested in adding about 40 more moorings. As of this writing, the commission is only exploring the possibilities. This

effort would require approval from the town of Jamestown, RIDEM, regarding water quality and RI CRMC. Fort Getty would likely be an integral part of any such expansion, providing the landside facilities, particularly parking, required by the town/state agencies.

South of the boat ramp is the **salt marsh**. While much of the marsh is under the protection of the Audubon Society and is a conservation zone, part of its western edge is owned by the town. In 2000, an Eagle Scout project by Drew Johnson created the **Kit Wright walking trail** in the woods and brush along this western edge of the marsh. Less than ½ mile long, the



walking trail is accessible from the main north-south access road that serves the park. In addition to the walking trail, the Boy Scouts, with funding from Jamestown's Rotary Club, constructed a wildlife observation platform that overlooks Fox Hill Salt Marsh. The Town's Parks and Recreation Department maintains the trail, and the Conservation Commission will maintain the platform.

The Town's parks and recreation department created and maintains a **walking path along the western bluff** of the park that winds northward to the causeway. The path runs by the accessible Commander's Position on the west side, and is hidden from the campground to the east by bushes and shrubs that deliberately have been left overgrown. Other paths leading down the cliff to the water emerge from this path, but footing is treacherous. Erosion led to the ground giving way under a small concrete structure that had served the fort known as the Cable House. It now sits askew, halfway down the bluff, visible from the park's path.

In 1999, the town zoned Fort Getty as **Open Space II Park and Recreation**, to be distinguished from Open Space I Preserve. As defined in the Zoning Ordinance, "the purpose of this zone is to allow agriculture as well as recreation activities that will not substantially impact the historic, scenic and /or environmental character of the zoning district, nor compromise natural resources."

In addition to the constructed or developed amenities, the park's natural attractions draw many daily visitors in summer. The rocky coast along the southwest is a well used fishing spot. **The south beach** is a wonderful place to launch a windsurfer. **Sheffield Cove** is a splendid place to kayak. A daily fee of \$15 or a Jamestown Recreation Department sticker is required for motor vehicles to enter the park from late May through early October. In summer and in winter it is a popular place to for Jamestown residents to jog, bicycle, or walk their dogs. When the campground is closed, many locals simply drive up and park to look at the view.



Existing Financial Conditions

Revenues for Fort Getty are placed in the general fund of the Town's budget. Each year the Recreation Director must request an operating budget for Fort Getty. Historically, there has been no specific or ongoing provision in the budget for long-term capital improvements to the park.

2004 Revenues

Seasonal Campsites	\$ 206,550.00
Daily RV Sites	\$ 80,214.00
Daily Tent Sites	\$ 22,948.00
Daily Entrance Fee	\$ 9,310.00
Daily Entrance Fee w/boat	\$ 4,837.00
Sewage pump station	\$ 85.00
Pavilion Rental	\$ 3,600.00
Seasonal Boat Parking	\$ 6,400.00

Total Revenue	\$333,944.00
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2004 Operating Costs:

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Salaries	\$ 60,447.00
<u>Salary Breakdown</u>	
Summer Staff	\$ 43,740.00
Allocated Staff	\$ 16,707.00
Supplies	\$ 550.00
Advertising & Printing	\$ 1,500.00
Telephone	\$ 480.00
Gas & Oil	\$ 1,430.00
Electricity	\$19,000.00
Trash Removal	\$ 6,800.00
Water	\$ 6,500.00
Sewage	\$ 1,300.00
Repairs	\$ 3,550.00
Equipment	\$ 1,250.00

Total Expenditures	\$102,807.00
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Net Income (69%) \$231,137.00

Capital Expenditures for Improvements since 1994 Report

<u>Repair/Improvement</u>	<u>Town Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>
1995 – Dock Repairs	\$3,000	\$12,000 from Harbor
2003 – Paving	\$20,373.68 (DPW)	
2003 Dock Survey		

Chapter 2

Resident Survey

One of the Towns prime recreation policies, as found in the Comprehensive Community Plan, is to “implement additional improvements to the Town owned park at Ft. Getty”. In addition, the Plan recommends, “providing for increased resident use of Ft. Getty Park in compliance with the Ft. Getty Master Plan”. The Ft. Getty Committee, in the Master Plan update process, grappled with how to interpret “additional improvements” and “increased resident use”. The Committee quickly decided after minimal resident input at the June 10th public forum, that they needed additional resident input in order to make proper recommendations on how to implement the policy and action in the Comprehensive Plan. In August 2004 the Town Planner, with the Assistance of Ashley Hahn, a Jamestown resident and Graduate Community Planning Intern and the Ft. Getty Committee then developed and distributed a resident survey to gauge the opinion of Jamestown residents on current and future use of Ft. Getty. Following is a summary of the survey responses followed by the direct survey questions and results.

Being in the early stages of the Master Plan update during the summer months turned out to be an asset to the Master Plan update process. It provided valuable input from campers at Ft. Getty both in terms of how the campground functioned and current and future needs of the campground. Campers often attended the bi-weekly public meetings and many attended the June 10 public forum. What seemed to be lacking is clear direction from residents on what they expected from their park; the only active Town waterfront park. It was, therefore, decided that the survey would be available only to residents of Jamestown. The survey was distributed by direct mail to all households with a street address as an insert in the Jamestown Press. Through a distribution foible copies of the survey were inserted in copies available at Cumberland Farms. We do not feel that this was a significant impact on the responses and that the error fits with the standard 5 percent margin of error for mail in surveys.

The survey respondents have a very interesting profile. Sixty percent of the respondents have lived in Jamestown for more than 15 years and have no children living in the immediate household (65%). Those responding lived all over the Island and rarely or never used Ft. Getty in the summer (63%) or in the off season (49%). A larger percentage used Ft. Getty several times a month in the off-season (26%) than in the summer (19%) and at least 10 percent of the respondents used Ft. Getty several times a week all year round. Of those respondents who rarely or never use Ft. Getty, the overwhelming reason was the feeling of intrusion on other park uses (158). Other reasons noted were inadequate facilities (65) and lack of parking (35).

Although 85% of the respondents have never camped at Ft. Getty, they were familiar enough with the other facilities that 66% of them noted that they were not satisfied with the condition of the facilities. The restrooms are most in need of upgrade, followed by boating/docking facilities and pavilion facility. The need for upgrading the restrooms was confirmed in a later question as the first choice future amenities. Of the 41 % of respondents who have used the boating/docking facilities, the number one upgrade requested was a recreational fishing pier (159), closely followed by touch and go docks (152) and then kayak/dinghy storage (119). Pavilion upgrades were named as incorporated restroom facility (191), clambake facility (127) and kitchen/cooking facility (85).

Knowing that the campground is the primary use in terms of overall space and how important the revenue has been to the Town of Jamestown over the years, we asked what would residents like to see happen to the campground knowing that it currently provides tax relief of about \$.16 per every \$1000 of valuation (\$56 per year for a house valued at \$350,000)? Forty one percent of respondents felt that it should remain the same, where 49% felt that some type of reduction is in order, whether it is reduction in size (19%) or elimination (30%). Eleven percent were not sure how to respond.

Paying for use of the park was supported by an overwhelming majority of the respondents(76%), where we currently sell seasonal stickers to residents and charge daily fees to non-residents.

Ft. Getty – Summer 2004 Resident Survey Results

Personal Information

- 1) **How long have you been a Jamestown resident?**
 - a. Less than 3 years (8%)
 - b. 3 to 6 years (9%)
 - c. 7 to 10 years (13%)
 - d. 11 to 14 years (11%)
 - e. more than 15 years (60%)

- 2) **How close do you live to Fort Getty?**
 - a. less than 2 miles (33%)
 - b. 2 to 4 miles (35%)
 - c. 5 to 7 miles (27%)
 - d. more than 7 miles(5%)

- 3) **How many children do you have in your Immediate household?**
 - a. 0 (65%)
 - b. 1 (9%)
 - c. 2 (18%)
 - d. 3 (5%)
 - e. 4 (2%)
 - f. 5 or more (1%)

Fort Getty Usage

- 4) **How often do you use Fort Getty :**
summer
 - a. several times a week (10%)
 - b. once or twice a week (8%)
 - c. a few times a month (19%)
 - d. rarely (39%)
 - e. never (24%)
off season
 - a. several times a week (13%)
 - b. once or twice a week (12%)
 - c. a few times a month (26%)
 - d. rarely (33%)
 - e. never (16%)

- 5) **As a Jamestown resident have you or your family ever camped at Fort Getty?**

- a. Yes (15%)
 - b. No (85%)
 - c. not sure
- 6) **If you answered yes to question 5, what type of camping was it? Please circle one:**
- a. tent (69%)
 - b. RV (31%)
- 7) **Are you satisfied with the condition of the facilities at Fort Getty?**
- a. yes (34%)
 - b. no (66%)
- 8) **If you answered no to the previous question, where do you feel upgrades are needed within the park?**
- a. pavilion facility (third choice)
 - b. campground facility (sixth choice)
 - c. restroom facility (First choice)
 - d. parking (fifth choice)
 - e. hiking/nature trails (forth choice)
 - f. boating/docking facility (second choice)
- 9) **Have you ever rented the pavilion facility?**
- a. Yes (23%)
 - b. no (77%)
- 10) **If you answered yes to question 9, were you satisfied with the facility and if no, why not.**
- a. Yes (69%)
 - b. no, (31%) why_____
- 11) **If the pavilion facility was upgraded please indicate all the amenities you would like to see available.**
- a. kitchen/cooking facility
 - b. clambake facility
 - c. multi-level pavilion rental facility
 - d. incorporated restroom facility
 - e. smaller pavilion facility (50 person capacity)
- 12) **Have you ever used the boating/ docking facilities at Fort Getty?**
- a. yes (41%)
 - b. no (59%)
- 13) **If you answered yes to question 12, were you satisfied with the facilities and if no, why not.**
- a. Yes (55%)
 - b. no, (45%) why_____
- 14) **If the boating / docking facilities were upgraded, please indicate all the amenities you would like to see available.**
- a. touch and go docks (second choice)
 - b. outhauls (forth choice)
 - c. recreational fishing pier (First choice)
 - d. kayak / dinghy storage (third choice)
 - e. launch service to mooring field (fifth choice)
- 15) **If you answered in question 5 that you rarely or never use Fort Getty in the summer, Please tell us why. (circle all that apply)**
- a. lack of parking (third choice)
 - b. feeling of intrusion on other park uses (first choice)
 - c. primarily use state parks (forth choice)
 - d. inadequate facilities (second choice)
 - e. others, please specify_____

- 16) With the knowledge that the Fort Getty Campground provides tax relief of about \$.16 per every \$1000 of valuation on you taxes (\$56 per year for a house valued at \$350,000), what would you like to see happen to the campground?
- a. remain the same (41%)
 - b. be reduced in size (19%)
 - c. be eliminated (30%)
 - d. not sure (11%)
- 17) Do you support user fees (resident stickers) to pay for improvements to Mackerel Cove and Fort Getty?
- a. yes (76%)
 - b. no (24%)

Amenities

- 18) From the list of amenities below, please circle all that you would like to see offered at Fort Getty for your family's use in the future.
- a. sailing school (fifth choice)
 - b. recreational fishing pier (second choice)
 - c. upgraded pavilion facility (fourth choice)
 - d. upgraded parking facilities (seventh choice)
 - e. fulltime summer daycare program (twelfth choice)
 - f. increased small boat storage (ninth choice)
 - g. upgrade existing/additional restroom facilities (1st)
 - h. landscaping to buffer camping area (sixth choice)
 - i. access to mooring field (eleventh choice)
 - j. open space (third choice)
 - k. clambake facility (eighth choice)
 - l. enclosed dog park facility (tenth choice)

Chapter 3

Problems and Opportunities

The 1994 Fort Getty Master Plan was developed precisely because there had never been a coherent and thorough review of the resources and facilities at Fort Getty or an analysis of the problems and opportunities present at the park. The park had developed in an ad hoc fashion, over time. Much of the town's effort had been spent simply to make fortifications safe and to reduce the town's liability.

The 1994 Fort Getty Master Plan was written by the Fort Getty Re-use Committee, established by the Town Council in 1993 to investigate "how best to manage the campground at Fort Getty." The campground dominated the committee's discussions because of the revenues it generated and the recognition that investment in the facility was required to maintain those revenues. In 1992, some campers reported getting shocks when they opened their RV doors, a situation attributed to problems with the campground's electric system. In 1993, the town spent \$79,000 for repairs to the electric system and an undetermined amount for repairs to the water system. In 1994, in response to the master plan, the restrooms were upgraded. In 2003, the roads of the campground were repaved. In the 10 years since the 1994 report, the only capital improvements to the park that were not related to the campground were the repairs to the dock initiated and primarily funded by the Harbor Management Commission.

In 2004, Fort Getty produced gross revenues of **\$333,944.00, (\$301,179.00 from the RV campground alone.)** It cost **\$102,807, (approximately 31% of gross)** to run the park, so net revenues were \$231,137. Since 1994, Fort Getty has generated **\$2.6 million** in gross revenues, providing in excess of **\$1.8 million to the Town's general fund**. In the same ten years, approximately **\$23,373 has been spent** on the improvements described above.

No other facility in Jamestown produces this kind of income. And so some might ask, "What is the problem? This is an extraordinary return on an investment." And they are right if only a financial return is considered. But two considerations must be made. The first, bluntly put, is that if the town is going to continue to regard the campground as a kind of cash cow, it must be nurtured, not only milked, or it will run dry from neglect. Moreover, nurture may produce even greater rewards. The second is that Fort Getty represents an ideal location for the facilities and programs that this community clearly craves: water dependent activities like boating, kayaking, windsurfing and fishing and water enhanced activities like clambakes, community functions, camping, and walking. The community has made their hopes for such programs and facilities evident through surveys and public forums that were used in developing the Town's Comprehensive Plan, in the lengthy discussions of the Harbor Commission in reorganizing its ordinance and developing its facilities plan, in other town meetings and in the surveys and public meetings held by this committee. Fort Getty offers access to the shore from beaches, a rocky coast, a dock, and a boat ramp, within the confines of a supervised park. It presents unique opportunities for the town that can both complement and supplement those provided by the town's other waterfront facilities and recreational programs, both public and private.

The absence of a vision and a plan for the facility has been the number one problem at the park. Except for the Harbor Commission's efforts, improvements have been

reactive and ad hoc. Those sponsored by the town have been prompted by either by a desire to limit liability, or to increase campground revenues. Volunteer efforts such as the Rembijas pavilion or the Kit Wright trail have been far more inspired and industrious. But they have not been coordinated with other efforts and so lack supporting infrastructure such as organized parking, trash facilities or signage. The result is a collection of randomly located facilities and disparate activities that overlap each other in awkward ways. Rest rooms are located in odd places that are not necessarily convenient for the most popular facilities. Over the years, the Parks Department has never been given the funds to better organize or manage the park.

Fort Getty Park is dominated by its biggest tenant, the RV campground. Between 1976 and 1990 the campground gradually expanded from 20 to 102 RV sites, and 15 tent sites were created as well. A holding area for overflow RV's was also created near the boat ramp, which was not busy during those years. Following the recommendations of the 1994 report, 2 more RV sites were added within the existing campground area, bringing the total to 104. In recent years, the effects of this expansion have been felt as daily traffic in the park, particularly in the area of the boat ramp and dock, has increased dramatically. There are more cars, and more boats. The absence of visual or landscape boundaries or buffers creates confusion for those visitors who are not campers. Some Jamestown residents describe their efforts to use the park as feeling like trespassing.

This report will provide a first step in providing a vision and a review of the existing and potential uses of the park and the problems they pose. But this is only a first step. It is necessary to follow up this report with a more in depth review and analysis of the uses of the facility and of their physical organization at the park, by people who are trained for the task. To ensure the compatibility of all of the activities that take place at the park, and to accommodate their expansion, alteration or the introduction of new activities, **a land use plan** should be developed that clarifies the uses and organizes the facilities that support them, including structures, parking, access and landscape features. The Harbor Commission has undertaken its own physical survey and analyses of the area of the dock and boat ramp, in conjunction with its efforts to improve and potentially enlarge the mooring field at West Ferry. These efforts need to be coordinated with the organization and management of the rest of Fort Getty. Consequently, we envision an **ongoing Fort Getty Committee** to work with Harbor and the Recreation department in implementing a coordinated plan for the facility. And we urge the establishment of a **capitol improvement fund specifically for Fort Getty** taken from the profits generated by the uses of the park, to pay for improvements. These recommendations are described in more detail in our next chapter.

As we seek to make Fort Getty more amenable and usable for residents, caution must be our byword. Improvements will bring more use, which is desirable, but increased use can also bring abuse of an area with an eco system as fragile as it is varied. As the saying goes, "If you build it, they will come." The population surge in Jamestown in the ten years since the construction of the Jamestown Verrazano Bridge and cross island highway is proof of this axiom. The potential of Fort Getty Park and the hazards inherent in its potential must be considered simultaneously and make a careful, comprehensive land use plan of Fort Getty Park all the more necessary.

Water Dependent Facilities and Programs: The Dock, Boat Ramp, Beaches and Mooring field

The Harbor Commission is to be applauded for the efforts it has made at Fort Getty. They have responded in both remedial and pro active ways to the problems and possibilities at the dock and boat ramp. They made repairs to the deck in 1995, then commissioned a survey of the structure (both above and below water) in 2002. In 2004, the Commission contracted repairs to the fastening of the outer batter pilings and has plans to invest \$45,000 in the pier over the next three years. The commission has already earmarked money in this year's budget to construct a **touch and go dock at the southern edge of the pier**. If the touch and go dock proves busy, Harbor will consider extending it eastward towards Sheffield Cove. They are also proposing to make improvements to the existing **boat ramp** including the introduction of floats and piers that will facilitate use of the ramp.

These improvements will no doubt increase the use of the facility. Consequently, improvements to **parking** in this immediate area, which is currently random and haphazard,



should also be considered at this time and in coordination with the other uses of this area of the park. Currently, RV campers park their boats and trailers along the access road to the ramp and dock. As daily and resident use of the ramp and dock increases, **an alternative location for campers, boats and trailers** should be considered. In the past, it has been suggested to use the dirt **parking lot** located south of ramp and east of the access road for automobile or boat trailer

parking. The change in elevation that exists between this area and the access road is no less than 6 feet. This area's proximity to the tidal pools and Audubon owned salt marsh makes the frequent introduction of cars and boat trailers problematic and potentially destructive. However, the area immediately adjacent to the access road might be considered for dinghy, kayak or equipment storage that could be accessed from the existing roads or ramp. The change in elevation might facilitate such storage.

Simultaneously, increased use of the ramp and dock necessitates an effort to protect the **tidal pools and Fox Hill salt marsh** to the south of the ramp. Signage that describes the area and restrictions to its use should be located adjacent to the ramp and the proposed floats. Additional vegetation should be planted in the lower field.



In the past, permits have been granted by the Harbor commission to dock commercial boats on various sides of **the dock**. In 2004, the survey and exploration vessels The Beavertail and Eastern Surveyor, owned by Jamestown residents Steve and Cindy Moreau were docked

on two sides of the dock. Harbor's plans to make the south side of the dock more user friendly for the recreational boater may preclude allowing the boats to continue dock there.

In addition, **the dock is a favorite place for recreational fishing**, for campers and town residents alike. More than half of the respondents to our committee's survey described fishing as an activity that they had enjoyed at Fort Getty. The presence of large commercial boats competes with the recreational fishermen for space. The Harbor commission envisions reserving the north and west sides of the dock for recreational fishing, an idea that this committee supports. For 2005, the Harbor Commission has agreed to allow one of the research vessels to dock on the east side, provided it does not interfere with the new touch and go docks to the south. The Fort Getty committee concurs with this temporary accommodation of one research vessel, but envisions at least **half the dock reserved for recreational fishing, with the southern edge accommodating the touch and go floats for recreational boaters.**

There has been only limited discussion of the **outhauls** in the Fort Getty Committee, since their organization and management are clearly within the purview of Harbor Management. Outhauls are a relatively inexpensive system of mooring, but do take up a significant piece of shoreline. Creating a deep water ramp in this area has been suggested, but so too has increasing the number of outhauls.

Over the past few months, the Town Council and Harbor Commission have been pondering a Boy Scout proposal for the construction of **rack storage for kayaks** somewhere in town. In March of 2005, the Boy Scouts made a formal request to the Fort Getty Committee. The Committee supports the location of such storage either in the vicinity of the Fort Getty's outhaul beach and boat ramp, near the protected waters of Sheffield Cove, or near the pavilion beach. Its precise location should be coordinated with the Harbor Commission and with other uses in this area.

Tides and wind make it difficult to launch boats or kayaks from the **cobble beach across the causeway facing west**, so it is not often used, but care should be taken to protect it from abuse as a result of increased use of the ramp or dock. As described above, improvements to the parking



lot immediately adjacent to this beach are long overdue. The creation of a turn around to the south of this beach would help in facilitating use of the boat ramp.

The organization of the parking in the area of the **South Beach**, by the park's entrance is already a critical necessity. This is a favorite windsurfing spot, but unfortunately impediments to travel onto the beach have been removed. Trucks and SUVs have been driven over beach grass and vegetation, which only promotes the erosion of the coastal feature. Because there are no clear parking spaces, cars park all over the place and in all directions, limiting access and parking to whoever gets there first. This area should be reviewed in the

land use plan, but the creation of a **parking area and the protection of the beach** by locating bollards or a fence at the entry could also be an Eagle Scout project.

An **expansion of the mooring field of Dutch Harbor and West Ferry** would have a profound impact on Fort Getty. The park would be the location for the parking, pumpout facilities and amenities such as bathrooms and showers that the town's comprehensive plan and



CRMC require with such an expansion of use. This part of the park would surely see an increase in use, all the more so if launch service is offered at the dock. Activities would overlap and facilities would need to be organized to accommodate multiple uses where possible, or protect particular activities where necessary. Additional parking, required by CRMC for moorings, would also be used by fishermen and kayakers. Boat trailer parking for daily users of the ramp would need to be organized and

restrictions on its use by other vehicles would need to be enforced. A pump out facility at the dock would probably be required by RIDEM, but its storage tank might also be used for the campground. Additional storage of dinghies to support more boats in the mooring field would need to be arranged. Quite clearly, any expansion, which is only under discussion by the Harbor Commission at this time, must be integrated into an overall plan for the park. An ongoing Fort Getty Committee could serve as the appropriate vehicle for coordinating these improvements and managing the facilities, responsibilities currently held by both the Harbor Commission and the Parks and Recreation Department.

Sailing Program

While the rural character of Jamestown has often been described as a prime reason for this community's appeal, the proximity to the water is perhaps so obvious a reason that it's rarely mentioned. Many Jamestown residents live here to be near the water and many of them are avid users of Narragansett Bay, some for work, but many for recreation. As described above, Fort Getty provides wonderful opportunities for residents interested in getting in or on the water, but to date Town involvement has been limited to the Harbor Commission's improvements and plans for the dock and ramp. It seems appropriate that, as the town's only waterfront park, the town might utilize the area to sponsor organized recreation programs for both kids and adults that would nurture the community's interest in water based activities. The Conanicut Yacht Club has offered sailing lessons for many years, but that program is usually filled within hours of its beginning registration. Fall River, Massachusetts provides a model of a sailing program that offers individuals and families the opportunity not only to take lessons but to use boats regularly by becoming members of a municipal sailing association.

The area of the dock and boat ramp, which face the calmer waters of Sheffield Cove, would prove an ideal location for a **sailing program** and the Harbor Commission's plans to upgrade these facilities offer an opportunity to begin to put the idea into effect. Touch and go or storage docks that the Harbor commission is proposing could accommodate the small boats that would serve such a program. A major piece of the capital investment is the boats themselves, but the program can start small and solicit donations, as other programs do. At the

beginning, the town might prevail upon one or another of the local boatyards to store boats and equipment in the off season, but plans should be developed to provide a **facility near the boat ramp to accommodate such storage**. Once again, uses could overlap in that such a storage facility might also provide the bathrooms that serve fishermen, recreational boaters and other daily users of the park. To get the sailing program up and running will likely require the services of someone with experience in developing and managing such a program. This warrants an initial investment of funds from the town. Once established the program will become part of the Recreation Department's programs for both adults and children.

Other Recreation Programs

A sailing program could become the cornerstone of organized water related recreation programs sponsored by the town at Fort Getty. Sailing isn't the only activity that is well suited to this location. **Fishing, kayaking and swimming** lessons could be promoted. There could also be **naturalist programs** that investigate the shore and water. Steve and Cindy Moreau are proposing to use their boat(s) to provide **educational tours** and these could become part of a program that explores the bay and its parks. And there could be programs that utilize Fort Getty as part of an investigation of **historical fortifications** of Narragansett Bay. All of these could occur during the school year or in the summer months.

In 2004, the Recreation Department made the Fort Getty pavilion the headquarters of its **summer day camp**, that ran from 9-12, Monday through Friday. The pavilion provided cover from the weather, which was an improvement from the old location of the playfields near the tennis courts at Watson and Melrose Ave. The program involves games, arts and crafts, educational programs and field trips for children ages 5 – 12. Hours of the camp are to be expanded in 2005. The timing seems ripe to coordinate some of these possibilities into a diverse and interesting group of recreation programs which take greater advantage of our waterfront. The hours of the camp are to be expanded in 2005. The timing seems ripe to coordinate some of these possibilities into a diverse and interesting group of recreation programs that is appropriate for an island community. The current and future requirements of these programs should be reviewed as part of any land use plan for Fort Getty. But it seems appropriate to this committee that the town's only waterfront park should serve as **the hub of this island's summer recreation program** and that facilities should be coordinated and created to support that idea.

The Rembijas Pavilion, Other Facilities and Fortifications

As described above, the **Rembijas pavilion** served as the headquarters for the Recreation Department's summer camp in the summer of 2004 and will do so again for an expanded program in 2005. The Rembijas pavilion epitomizes the volunteer spirit of the Jamestown community. In the late 1970's John Rembijas, then chair of the Democratic Town



Committee and Tony Vieira, chair of the Republican Town Committee, brought together donations and volunteers to construct this pavilion to house town events. Work began in 1977. It was completed in 1978. Unfortunately, John Rembijas died in the midst of the effort. In 1980, the facility was dedicated and named LT. Col John Rembijas Pavilion. The open air roofed structure has held an

extraordinary variety of events in its 25 years, from weddings and bar mitzvahs to truck pulls and political clambakes. 130 feet by 40 feet, it is a vast space that best serves big events. Its proximity to the beach and the water of Narragansett Bay has discouraged the installation of permanent cooking or bathroom facilities, though there is a large barbecue pit at the west end. When the weather is bad, white poly wind curtains are hung to keep out the wind and rain, much as they are at open air restaurants.

The Pavilion is showing signs of wear. Local engineer Dick Pastore looked at the facility in 1999 and determined that without a more comprehensive review of the condition of the posts below grade, he could not determine the structural integrity of those supports. He noted that the roof trusses and their attachments do not comply with current building code requirements and recommended a wind load calculation be performed. He estimated the cost of such a structural investigation and report to be \$40000. Without a report, it is unknown what the costs to update or repair the structure would be. Since that time, the fees generated by the rental of the Pavilion have been placed in a special fund to pay for a structural review and repairs. There is currently over \$18,000 in the fund.

The requirements of the building code have only gotten more stringent in the years since Mr. Pastore made his report. A simple look at the interior of the roof structure reveals its frailty. Instead of spending money to confirm what is obvious, this committee suggests that a **design competition** could be sponsored to renovate the pavilion, maintaining the slab and the telephone pole posts, but introducing new structural supports for a new roof that could take a new shape. Consideration might be given to make the space more conducive to gatherings of different sizes, as well as providing some cooking facilities that will resist the battering of weather. Trash disposal and restrooms, though perhaps temporary, should also be considered in both the design competition for the pavilion and in the general land use plan. Again, as we have stated about other parts of Fort Getty, this facility and its parking requirements must be coordinated with other uses in a land use plan.

Other Facilities

The same plan might also look at **the recreational uses around the pavilion**, up the hill to the west, to the north where there is currently a volleyball net and along the beach and coast. Small barbecue pits could be constructed on the beach to provide for gatherings smaller than those typically held at the pavilion. These could also be reserved, though not necessarily requiring a fee. **The South beach** is a favorite windsurfing spot. The organization of the parking in this area is critical. Cars have been driven over beach grass and vegetation, which only promotes the erosion of the coastal feature. Because there are no clear parking spaces, cars park all over the place and in all directions, limiting access and parking to whoever gets there first. This area should be reviewed in the land use plan, but the creation of a parking area and the protection of the beach by locating bollards or a fence at the entry could be an Eagle Scout project.

Battery Whiting exemplifies the disarray apparent in this area. Suffering from neglect and the battering of storms, its concrete is crumbling. Moreover, it is used by Jamestown's volunteer Fire Department as a training site, (in fact, it may be its only training site,) and so it is often either charred or filled with junk to be set on fire. The Department is loath to give up its use of the Battery, but it seems a shame to have what can only be described as an eyesore so close to the entrance of the park. The vista from the upper level is extraordinary and suggests that, if it could be rehabilitated, it could also serve as a kind of pavilion or gathering place for residents or visitors. The two lower rooms could be used as a visitor center providing information on the history of the area, as an office or as storage.

A similar disarray is evident at the Park's entrance. The **guard's shack** is a solidly built structure of concrete block, but at approximately 8 feet by 10 feet, it is cramped and inadequate. A portajohn across the road serves as restroom. This is another facility that warrants review. A simple recommendation that might help in the management of the park is to install **gates** at the entry. The gates could be open when the guard is there, but the opportunity to close them allows the guard to investigate problems or make tours of the facility.

Parks and Recreation Department equipment and vehicles are parked somewhat haphazardly in the partially cleared lot to the south of the guard shack. The **pumpout station for the RV campers** and a septic system and leach field that dates to the World War II hospital are located at the east end of the field. These fields are part of the 5.4 acre parcel that has as yet been under utilized and holds promise for the park. The committee believes it is an appealing site for **tent camping**, nestled among the trees and within view of the 24 hour supervision of the Guard Shack. Transient tent campers have not always been compatible neighbors with the RV campground and have posed problems for management in the past. Removing the tent sites from their current location offers some flexibility in any re-organization of the RV campground.

Obviously, the relocation of the tent sites would require the installation of **restrooms and showers**. These could serve the guard shack and also South Beach and Battery Whiting. The existing septic field should be assessed for its viability, but it is probably on its last legs. The pumpout could be moved to one of the other fields or be combined with a dock pumpout, as described above or be included in a new system that would serve the new restrooms. This eastern part of the 5.4 acres might then be used to accommodate other uses, such as boat parking for the campground. An appropriate **vegetative buffer** of no less than 50 feet must be

maintained between any new uses of this area and the abutter's property to the south, west and east of this parcel. The town should be careful in clearing the area for any new uses to protect existing growth and it should supplement the existing vegetation with new plantings to thicken the buffer.

Implicit in a reorganization of this area is the need for **storage for the Parks and Recreation Department**. A land use plan for the whole park must include a review of better locations for the Parks department to store equipment and vehicles. In addition (and described above) Fort Getty could be an ideal headquarters of existing and expanded summer recreation programs, which bring with them additional storage and parking requirements. The committee believes that an appropriate area to consider for a facility that could accommodate such storage is to the east of the main battery, the current location of the brick building that was once a store and now houses restrooms that serve mostly the tent campers. Temporarily, the Department could use the brick building for storage, but ultimately a larger facility is required to garage mowers and vehicles and house equipment and supplies. This area, set into the hill, could be the site for a multipurpose facility that provides storage and a garage at the lowest level, and space for Recreation programs and offices at a second level that is accessible from higher grade. At the top of the building and of the hill, there could be a third feature: an enclosed pavilion that could be used all year. If such a space had cooking facilities, it could be rented for all types of gatherings and generate significant revenues.

Improvements to the rest room facilities at the park was the number one request of respondents to the survey sent to residents. While the Recreation Department plans to upgrade the existing restrooms in the next two years, the location of such facilities in more appropriate areas, in closer proximity to the pavilion or the dock, for example, will enhance the use of these facilities.

Fortifications

Fort Getty's more than 100 year history and notable artifacts afford valuable interpretative opportunities as yet untapped. Over the years nothing has been done to or for the historic remnants except the fencing off or filling in with soil to make hazardous locations safer. Today even these minimal measures need revisiting and the three recognizable battery structures themselves require a professional engineer's evaluation for structural integrity lest they slowly disintegrate.

Fortunately, the Jamestown Historical Society recently formed a subcommittee to develop signage for the historic features of the park. In fact, the Society hopes that their design will be adopted for fortification sites all around Narragansett Bay. The State Historic Commission has expressed interest since they plan a survey of all state fortifications and have launched substantial restoration work on Ft. Adams across the East Passage in Newport.

Besides signage and general interpretation throughout the park, the Jamestown Historical Society wants to turn the bunker-like **Battery Commander's Position** into a diorama fully open to the public. The Fort Getty Committee envisions using **Battery Whiting's** top deck for small scale open air events, casual picnics, or simply viewing of the West Passage. Possibly the two lower level rooms could house an information center, park office or storage space.

As recreational use of the park intensifies, the committee foresees the possibility of building a **year-round multipurpose facility** as described above, against the exposed corner of **Battery Toussard**, to serve recreation storage needs. The top floor with 360 degree views could open out onto refurbished historic gun emplacement pads, used as terraces, and also onto the north lawn. Included might be the kitchen facilities that caterers have suggested would be desirable for groups they typically serve now in the Rembijas Pavilion. Lower floors could provide restrooms, meeting rooms, classrooms, staff office space, and storage. Through interior windows visitors could get a closer look at underground levels of Battery Toussard, now fenced off and exposed to the elements.

Water Enhanced Facilities: RV Campground, Tent Camping Paths and Trails

RV Campground

The RV campground is the biggest tenant, if you will, of Fort Getty Park, inhabiting about 6 acres at the northwest corner of the park. It is a source of some controversy in Jamestown. At the public forum held by this committee in June, several Jamestown residents urged the committee to consider eliminating the campground. Some residents described the place as an eyesore; for others, a return to a more natural landscape outweighed the financial benefits provided by the campground.

But expressions of support for the campground were just as numerous. Many cited the financial benefit to taxpayers from the revenues generated by both RV and tent camping. In 2004, Fort Getty revenues were worth approximately 16 cents of Jamestown's tax rate. Campground residents also described the financial benefits to businesses from their presence. While some Jamestowners bemoan the site of the "trailers" as they are often described, others are pleased that the town provides a place for an "affordable" vacation, a place for "the little guy."

The 2004 Fort Getty committee set itself the task of considering all of the options and possible uses for the park. That list included closing the RV campground. In the summer of 2004, the park seemed particularly vulnerable to criticism. RVs, especially those located at the easternmost row, near the access road to the dock and ramp, were sprawled in all directions to get the view. On the other side of the access road, campers' boats filled the rented long term boat parking spots. Overflow RVs, without reservations, were allowed to park, at the regular nightly fee and without hookups, in the holding area near the boat ramp, adding to an already congested parking situation. On weekends there seemed to be more cars than usual and they were parked all over.

At the same time, because many campers return year after year, the community that has developed among the seasonal campers at Fort Getty is a friendly one. It's a neighborhood that polices itself and has required very little from the town. And the town has offered it little. In 2004, the campground alone generated over \$300,000 in gross revenues and costs totaled about a third of that amount. In the 10 years since the last Ft Getty report, the campground has generated over \$1,800,000 to the general fund of the Town of Jamestown. In the same ten years, the Town of Jamestown's has spent approximately \$23,000 on the campground.

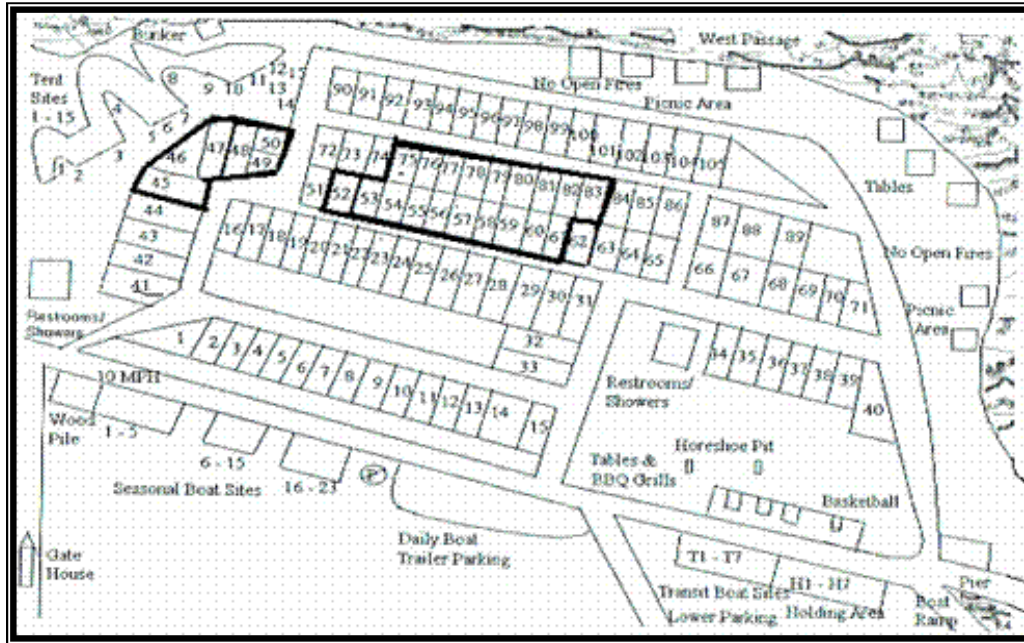
The Committee spent many hours discussing the campground and reviewing options for the space it occupies, some of which had been offered at the public hearing held in June. While sympathetic to the idea of creating more open space, the committee acknowledged that Fort Getty has been developed for over 100 years and that open space resources might best be spent in more pristine environments vulnerable to new development. Both outdoor and indoor recreational facilities were suggested as alternatives to the RV campground. The micro climate at the top of the hill, (the location of the RV campground) makes its transformation into recreational ball fields problematic. Indoor recreation facilities, like a gym, could be located anywhere and neither benefits from Fort Getty's proximity to the water nor add to its use. Other uses were discussed, but these did not necessarily conflict with the RV campground.

The 2004 Ft. Getty Committee ultimately decided against recommending the closure of the RV campground. As a recreational resource, the committee concluded that Ft Getty is best suited for water dependent and water enhanced uses, and that facilities to support such uses already exist and can be supplemented or improved. A better managed, somewhat smaller campground is not incompatible with those uses.

The appearance of the RV campground in 2004, the haphazard location of the lower row of RVs, the location of overflow RVs in parking lots, the sheer number of cars, boats and RVs at the park, should not be repeated. The committee believes that **the facility requires more man hours dedicated to the task of management and maintenance.** Currently, reservations and information for the campground are handled by the part time recreation clerk. Beginning in March running through the summer season, Ft. Getty becomes an all consuming occupation for that clerk. Mowing and trimming, and the maintenance of the two rest room buildings, the pavilion, RV hook-ups, picnic tables and other campground fixtures is performed by Parks and Recreation Department summer workers under the supervision of the year-round Parks Supervisor. The services of the clerk and other Recreation and Parks workers is described in existing financial conditions as allocated staff. In addition, Fort Getty specifically requires the effort of 5 gate house attendants, 1 part-time weekend maintenance person and 1 part-time weekend security person. One of the gate house attendants is a supervisor and together with the Recreation clerk, they manage the campground. We believe it is time to either hire a full time recreation clerk or a part time clerk or clerk/manager specifically for Fort Getty.

The committee also believes that **the campground is too big**, that 104 RV camper sites are too many. We suggest a gradual reduction over the next five years to, at the most, 90 sites. This can be done by reducing transient sites or seasonal sites. Eliminating transient sites is easier, but the campground becomes less accessible to the public. Transient sites, if filled for the season, are also more lucrative. Seasonal sites are currently full, so reducing their number means eliminating a spot for a current camper. Attrition prompted by an increase in fees may accomplish the goal. The committee has suggested such an increase in fees. In 2005, the Recreation department increased the seasonal rate from \$2550 to \$3175 and the daily rate from

\$30 to \$40. At first glance, these increases may seem steep. But in reality, they bring the Fort Getty campground to a rate comparable to similar facilities, such as the campground by 2nd



beach in Middletown. The Middletown campground offers better (newly improved) electrical service, and ready access to the beach but it lacks the extraordinary setting offered at Fort Getty.

Nonetheless, such increases in fees should be accompanied by significant improvements in the facilities. We have already documented the extraordinary financial benefit that the RV campground provides the town of Jamestown. Renewed investment in the park is more than appropriate, it is necessary if those rewards are to continue. The same land use plan that will hopefully direct improvements for Jamestown's use of the park should also outline improvements to the campground. The reorganization of the campground and its roads should be considered. Improvements to the electrical system are planned as are upgrades to the restrooms. Currently campers pay for pumpout of their storage tanks. In lieu of providing sewers, which could prompt greater water usage, the town should consider providing pumpout service as part of the seasonal fee.

Tent Camping

In the summer of 2004, Newsweek Magazine described **tent camping** at Fort Getty as a great vacation bargain, especially for its proximity to Newport. The Ft Getty Committee believes tent camping is an important asset of the park, providing affordable vacations for non residents and recreational opportunities for residents and groups like the Boy Scouts, who have a camp-out before the summer season each year. Tent camping is also relatively lucrative, grossing \$23,000 in fees in 2004.

The tent camping facility is currently located at the top of the hill, south of the RV campground, close to the old Batteries Toussard and House. Much of it sits on fill that occasionally develops sink holes and exposes the crumbling concrete. The current facility is a bit crowded, sits unprotected, buffeted by wind, (but with a great panoramic view) and exists in

uneasy proximity with the RV campground. Rest room facilities are to the east at the bottom of the hill, or at the north end of the RV campground.

The Fort Getty committee has considered relocating the tent camping facility to the 5.4 acre parcel south of the guard shack. The area would need to be cleared more than it currently is, but the presence of trees for cover and the proximity to the guard shack might help to solve some of the current problems. The introduction of rest room facilities in this area would be welcome, as described in previous sections. The area is not flat however, so some care needs to be taken in any organization of a campground. Moreover, the location is also the part of the park closest to a residential neighbor, so appropriate buffers must be installed and maintained. Hence, the Ft Getty Committee suggests that moving the tent camping facility or a possible expansion of the numbers of tent campers should be reviewed in the general land use plan.

Walking Trails

The relocation of tent camping to the south or its expansion might prompt an extension of the **walking trails that** are among Ft Getty's most desirable features for residents and visitors. A trail that runs by the south beach would be appropriate if the tent camping were relocated to the southern 5.4 acres. A walking zone located between the parking and the beach itself might serve to protect the beach from cars and abuse and could be included among the other improvements and protections being considered for this area.

The **trails by the western coast** are particular favorites off season, when residents bring their dogs to the park. In season, campers



complain that the vegetation blocks the view, but it has proven successful in separating the trails from the campground. Dispensers for “poopbags” should be provided near the start of the trails and trash cans should be installed wherever parking is provided.

The Kit Wright Trail borders the salt marsh to the east of the park and is a model of initiative emblematic of Jamestown's Eagle Scouts. Increased use of the access road to the ramp and dock threaten the health of its vegetation, however. (The town's dumping of snow and street debris along this road during the winter of 2005 didn't help either.) We urge the Conservation Commission to promote additional planting between the access road and the trail.

The **introduction of additional landscape features**, trees, shrubs and other plantings, will be an important part of any land use plan at the Park. Such elements will not only enhance the trails, but the park in general by providing visual and aural buffers from access roads, parking and different uses.

The interest of Jamestown's Historical Society in developing signage for the park and in restoring some of the fortifications is a welcome development for the trails and the park in general. The Society's efforts at the Conanicut Battery are exemplary and the rich history of Fort Getty can only add to the enjoyment of the trails. For example, a diorama at the Battery Commander Position, which the Historical Society is proposing, will be a delightful stop along

the coastal trail. As at the Battery, the town should work with the Society to solicit grants for the **restoration of the fortifications and for interpretive signage and historical displays.**

Other Uses

Dog Park: The location of a dog park at Fort Getty was discussed by the committee. A dog park was understood to be an area enclosed by a fence that would be a place for people to let the dogs run loose. There is such a park near the entrance to the Pell Bridge in Newport. The committee believed that such a facility, that did not require or benefit from a proximity to the water and is best located elsewhere.

Simultaneously, the committee noted that Ft. Getty is a favorite place for people to **walk with their dogs, often with the dogs off leash.** The committee would encourage this activity. However, receptacles must be installed supplying bags for picking up dog excrement and trash barrels should be located convenient to parking lots for disposing of the excrement and bags. Fort Getty's appeal for dog owners is due, in part, to not having to leash one's dog. The committee recognizes this but notes that while dogs need not be leashed, they must be under their owner's or handler's control, as per the Jamestown's Animal control ordinance.

Concerts, Fairs and Community Events. It is the hope of the committee that the improvements described herein to the park, in general, and the pavilion and other potential gathering places in particular, will encourage more events sponsored by town organizations as well as private groups, to be held at the park.

Park Management

The management of Fort Getty Park has historically been focused upon management of the campground, during camping season. Prior to the advent of RV camping on the property, little was done to manage public use, and maintenance consisted mainly of mowing the grass in season. In the early days of the organized campground, reservations for the twenty seasonal sites were handled quickly and easily by the Parks and Recreation Office, and maintenance consisted of mowing the grass and cleaning and stocking the single restroom building, chores performed by seasonal Parks and Recreation Department employees. There were no individual RV hook-ups, and no other campground infra-structure to speak of. Waterfront activities were not closely managed.

Currently, management of the Park is still handled by the Parks and Recreation Department, and still consists primarily of managing the campground, although daily use of the park for water related activities has increased significantly. The guard house at the park entrance is manned 24 hrs a day, mid-May through early October, and the attendants are responsible for collecting daily parking fees, nightly camping fees, confirming arrivals with reservations, assisting campers and others with information and basic security. There is no on-site supervision of waterfront activities. Mowing and trimming, and the maintenance of the two rest room buildings, the pavilion, RV hook-ups, picnic tables and other campground fixtures is performed by Parks and Recreation Department summer workers under the supervision of the year-round Parks Supervisor. Maintenance and improvement of the dock, outhauls and ramp area is managed and funded by the Harbor Commission.

Parks and Recreation Department staffing dedicated to the operation of Fort Getty Park consists of 5 gate house attendants, 1 part-time weekend maintenance person and 1 part-time weekend security person. All other management and maintenance duties are performed by allocated staff. The cost comparison between dedicated and allocated staff is reported in “Existing Financial Conditions”. As described in a previous section, management of the campground alone warrants additional man hours and focus. We believe that there should be a “go to” person for Fort Getty, a manager whose full time efforts from March through October are dedicated to the campground and the park at Fort Getty. The committee has also considered that Fort Getty might support the introduction of a Park Ranger or Warden who could help to police all the uses of the park.

Chapter 4

Review of Previous (1994) Master Plan

Below is a chart comparing the 1994 Master Plan goals with the newly developed 2004 Revised Master Plan goals. While the goals do not differ radically, the reality, as described in the chapters above, is that some goals have not been fulfilled to the extent that the 1994 Committee would have hoped. Understated in the goals of that committee was the desire by the town to maximize the revenues generated by the campground. In fact, the preface to the 1994 report states that the committee was established “to investigate how best to manage the campground at Fort Getty Park. The committee spent many evenings discussing various management options, and researched the market potential of the park. They recommended that the town continue to own and operate the park and began to develop a master plan for the current and future uses of the park.”

1994 Fort Getty Master Plan Goals	2004 Fort Getty Master Plan Goals
<p><u>Goal I:</u> <i>Improve public access to park amenities for residents, and take steps to address perceptual problems, which limit its use by residents during the camping season.</i></p>	<p><u>Goal I:</u> <i>Upgrade park facilities and amenities, which will enhance the appeal of the park for residents and other visitors</i></p>
<p><u>Goal II:</u> <i>Develop additional active and passive recreational opportunities for residents and upgrade camping facilities and amenities, which will enhance the appeal of the park for campers and other visitors.</i></p>	<p><u>Goal II:</u> <i>Develop additional water dependent and water enhanced active and passive recreational opportunities for residents</i></p>
<p><u>Goal III:</u> <i>Develop annual events, which encourage Jamestown residents to utilize the park.</i></p>	<p><u>Goal III:</u> <i>Maintain positive financial revenues from current and future uses at Fort Getty that will be available for park maintenance and improvements</i></p>
<p><u>Goal IV:</u> <i>Achieve a continued positive financial impact to the Town while planning for ongoing improvements and maintenance.</i></p>	

In 2004, although the campground is a major element in our discussion of the park, it is not the primary emphasis. In public forums and a citizen survey, Jamestown residents have expressed an interest in the park beyond its revenue generating capacities. In addition, as the

Comprehensive Plan reports, Jamestown's growing population possesses an equally growing demand for water based amenities and facilities for which Fort Getty park is ideally suited.

On the following pages is a table identifying the specific recommendations from the 1994 Fort Getty Master Plan and the actions taken concerning those recommendations. Often factors such as budgeting or time constraints did not allow for certain recommendations to be enacted. It is necessary to identify these reasons so that future attention can be directed to these areas. In addition, the current state of these improvements is described in italics.

<p align="center">Recommendations from 1994 Master Plan</p>	<p align="center">Action(s) Taken</p>
<p>Create brochure describing park amenities, rules, prohibited uses, etc to every park visitor</p>	<p>Annual Camping brochure/discontinued glossy flyer. <i>Camping brochure indicates boundaries, not enforced.</i></p>
<p>Design and install signage to orient visitors and encourage easy access</p>	<p>Signage installed to identify parking, nature trail, dock, etc. <i>While signage for the Kit Wright trail is evident, only the random no parking or handpainted No littering sign is otherwise evident.</i></p>
<p>Implement landscape plan for park with emphasis on trees and shrubs to "soften" effect of trailers</p>	<p>Vegetative buffer being allowed to grow between campers and perimeter walk path to the west. <i>No other landscaping evident.</i></p>
<p>Create Fort Getty Advisory Committee to advocate for implementation of improvements recommended in plan</p>	<p align="center">Not Done</p>
<p>Replace electric and water distribution system immediately</p>	<p>Completed prior to 1994 season. <i>Needs upgrade.</i></p>
<p>No expansion of the number of campsites at this time</p>	<p>1994 report describes 100 sites. There are currently 105 in 2004 brochure.</p>
<p>Infrastructure improvements should be designated and built to serve up to 20 additional campsites in the future</p>	<p>Not done due to conflict with goal of increasing resident use, aesthetics of the park, and public concern over water use.</p>
<p>Upgrade restrooms with wall covering, fixtures, and ventilation to meet building and sanitation standards.</p>	<p>Done. <i>Further upgrades needed.</i></p>
<p>Additional showers should be constructed in both facilities</p>	<p>Current level of use does not justify. Water saving sensors were installed.</p>
<p>Install recreation equipment within campground, including small playground, basketball court and shuffle board</p>	<p>Sand volleyball court installed near pavilion. Others not compatible with current passive uses/Open Space zoning.</p>
<p>Campground should not be connected to municipal sewer system. Capital planning should account for eventual replacement of park's sewage disposal system</p>	<p>Campground does not have sewer system <i>No improvements, except for annual pumpouts have been made to the septic systems since 1994.</i></p>
<p>Layout informal "amphitheater" area between the restrooms and pier. Schedule periodic programs for campers and residents</p>	<p>Not Built, capital funding required.</p>
<p>Remedy structural deficiencies in the pavilion using funds from the Pavilion Capital Account</p>	<p>Not done, insufficient funds in pavilion account for required work.</p>
<p>Raise pavilion rental fees for large groups (50+). Efforts should be made to make pavilion available for rental primarily to island residents.</p>	<p>Pavilion rental limited to Island residents, rent raised to \$150 per use. Fee often waived by Town Council when petitioned by user.</p>

<p align="center">Recommendations from 1994 Master Plan (con't)</p>	<p align="center">Action(s) Taken (con't)</p>
<p>Physical improvements to the pavilion should include replacing the grills, adding picnic tables, installing a clambake pit, and periodic replacement of wind screens</p>	<p align="center">Done. <i>Needs upgrade</i></p>
<p>Investigate the potential for developing a junior golf training area in the multi-use field, which could be used for other purposes when golf classes are not being run.</p>	<p align="center">Investigated, deemed incompatible with current passive uses and frequent use of the area for special events</p>
<p>The area should be used for special events and fundraisers. Temporary vendor booths should be considered.</p>	<p align="center">Area frequently used for special events and fundraisers; events are still being added. Booths provided by vendors.</p>
<p>Define and mark parking and traffic circulation patterns on the causeway.</p>	<p align="center">Not Done</p>
<p>Consider installing new boat ramp near end of causeway.</p>	<p align="center">Considered by Harbor Commission and Parks and Rec. Dpt., favor floating docks. <i>Harbor Commission to make improvements to ramp in 2006.</i></p>
<p>Work w/ Harbor Management Commission to consider organized uses of dock, including sailing clubs, fishing tournaments, and dock space for commercial boats.</p>	<p align="center">Commercial boats are currently renting dock space on North and south sides, <i>Harbor Commission plans for touch and go dock on south side in 2005</i></p>
<p>Consider installation of a float system along the north end of the pier to improve access to the water</p>	<p align="center">Harbor funds are currently earmarked for installation of floating docks on the south side.</p>
<p>Encourage use of the pavilion beach for launching boardsailers, possibly organizing a seasonal competition/regatta</p>	<p align="center">Area currently popular with boardsailers. No organized activities</p>
<p>Formalize parking near beach w/ barriers to limit encroachment on beach. Develop walkways throughout</p>	<p align="center">Partially done. <i>Parking area lacks definition or limitation. Cars are driven over vegetation onto beach</i></p>
<p>Continue to allow use of pier beach for launching craft for trips to Dutch Island, discourages use as bathing beach</p>	<p align="center">Done</p>
<p>Town should coordinate with the Army Corps of Engineers to minimize safety concerns of the old forts</p>	<p align="center">Done. <i>Continued effort needed.</i></p>
<p>Fire training at entry bunker should cease. The bunker should be cleaned of soot, have cracks filled in concrete, and painted an appropriate color.</p>	<p align="center">Not Done</p>
<p>Seek outside funding for long-term restoration of forts to maintain sense of historic setting.</p>	<p align="center">Not Done</p>
<p>Develop small scattered parking areas along the roadways</p>	<p align="center">Some done. <i>Haphazard.</i></p>
<p>Improve access to lower parking lot near the boat ramp, and organize to permit boat trailer parking.</p>	<p align="center">Not Done</p>

<p align="center">Recommendations from 1994 Master Plan (con't)</p>	<p align="center">Action(s) Taken (con't)</p>
<p>Clear portion of land south of the gatehouse for overflow parking. Area should be kept as field, its use will be only for specific events.</p>	<p align="center">Done</p>
<p>Coordinate with Audubon Society, Conanicut Island Land Trust, and Conservation Commission to develop a wildlife observation area overlooking Fox Hill Pond.</p>	<p align="center">Kit Wright Trail completed by Eagle Scout Drew Johnson</p>
<p>Work with the Conservation Commission to reseed eroded areas along the western bluff.</p>	<p align="center">Discussion Only</p>
<p>Develop a walking/jogging trail around the perimeter of the park interspersed with exercise stations.</p>	<p align="center">Trail Done/ Stations Not Done</p>
<p>Capital improvements should be implemented by the years referred to in Capital Improvement Section, or as funding permits.</p>	<p align="center">As funding permits.</p>
<p>Plan should be reviewed by the Town Administrator and Recreation Director to determine progress in its implementation.</p>	<p align="center">Reviewed annually during budget process.</p>

Chapter 5

Future Vision for Fort Getty

The 2004 Fort Getty committee envisions a park in which a well organized RV campground of between 80 and 90 sites coexists with improved water related programs and amenities. We believe and hope these improvements will prompt increased use of the park by Jamestown residents. We recognize that simultaneous with such improvements and increased use, the fragile resources at Fort Getty must also be protected. This vision sees a park in which boating, fishing and other water dependent facilities are improved, new water dependent and water enhanced recreation programs are initiated, automobile, boat and trailer parking is organized, bathrooms are located convenient to the most popular facilities, the pavilion, fortifications and paths are restored and improved, signage and access is clear and coherent, trash disposal and Recreation Department storage are appropriately located and landscape features are developed to maintain privacy for the campground, provide buffers between uses and protect the vulnerable and picturesque landscape.

Like our predecessor in 1994, this committee has specific recommendations by which it will accomplish this vision.

General Recommendations:

1 Fort Getty Capital Improvement Fund

Between 1995 and 2004, Fort Getty has contributed \$2,671,393 to the Jamestown's General Fund. In the same time frame, \$23,373 has been taken from the General Fund and spent on Fort Getty, less than 1% of the revenue the park has generated. In analyzing the many recommendations for improving Fort Getty, the committee recognizes that a far greater capital investment is required. Given the town's history regarding this remarkable asset, the committee does not believe the town will provide the necessary funding each year from the general fund. The committee therefore recommends that the town establish a Fort Getty Capital Fund dedicated to financing these improvements. We believe that for the next ten years at least, this fund should not be dependent upon the good will of a sitting Town Council, but should be part of a committed program, funded by Fort Getty itself, with a specific amount allotted for each year.

During the past ten years the town's net income from Fort Getty has increased approximately 4% annually. The committee recognizes that the town needs to retain this revenue stream with this rate of growth each year. The committee proposes increasing fees for RV camping, (bringing the campground to a rate similar to that charged in Middletown,) campers' boat parking, camp entry fee for cars with boats without a resident sticker and pavilion rental in 2005. The committee suggests other increases may be implemented over the next five years, but only as improvements begin. The Fort Getty Capital fund will equal the remainder of the total revenue minus the operating cost and minus 104% of the previous year's income to the general fund.

In addition to the Ft Getty capital fund, Harbor Management funds and Harbor Infrastructure funds will be used to support boating and water dependent projects approved by the Harbor Commission. Grants for historic improvements, RIDEM recreation grants and other

resources will be solicited, as will donations. A Friends of Fort Getty could be established to offer support or a sailing program could solicit donation of boats and equipment.

2 Fort Getty Committee

The improvements to Fort Getty recommended in this report warrant the establishment of a committee that will help to oversee their implementation. Such a committee provides a public forum for the review of these improvements and other changes to the physical facilities, management structure or use of the park. Such a committee should include the Recreation Director, the chair of the Harbor Commission, a representative of either the Planning department or the Planning Commission, a liaison from the Town Council and at least one citizen at large.

Fort Getty is a unique intersection of various uses and activities, as well as the various departments, committees and authorities charged with their supervision. A Fort Getty committee can help to coordinate these uses and their management and provide a means by which the public can be involved in the discussion. When the Recreation Department or Harbor Commission is ready to initiate a project, it should be reviewed and approved by a Fort Getty Committee, upon which a formal request to expend capital from the Fort Getty Capital fund will be submitted for approval to the Town Council.

3 Development of a Land Use Plan

A visitor arriving at the entry building on Fort Getty Road first views an array of lawn care and other town owned equipment parked under the only shady grove in sight. Proceeding on to the pier the visitor passes a fire blackened battery, then remnants of building foundations housing assorted vehicles and the odd set of steps or sidewalk to nowhere. Lastly, turning around and looking up at the hilltop on the way out, the visitor notices the baldness of terrain at the top of the hill on which sits multitudinous RV campers and cars. The impact of vehicles can become overwhelming on summer weekends, like Fourth of July, when the campsites are fully populated by owners and their guests.

Such a stunning site deserves more from the Town of Jamestown. It deserves a plan.

The 2004 Fort Getty Committee will consider its efforts to be successful if the first recommendation implemented is the development of a land use plan for Fort Getty. Our efforts, as spirited and well intentioned as they may be, should be reviewed by professionals trained for the task. A land use plan will begin with a systematic survey of the site's topography and a review of all the current and proposed uses of the park. This information, as well as this plan and the 2004 survey conducted by this committee should then be analyzed to make sure that the uses are compatible and can reside on the land in an agreeable and functionally suitable manner without degrading the environment.

Spaces designated for the various uses and movement patterns throughout the park may require reconfiguration or elimination of existing roads. Turn-around opportunities, drop-off and pick-up nodes, parking arrangements, trash disposal and equipment storage, must be defined and located. Landscape amenities like trash receptacles, doggy bag dispensers, clambake pits, BBQ units, benches, picnic tables, play equipment, and the like need to be positioned.

An integral part of such planning would be appropriate planting for functional as well as aesthetic purposes. There needs to be more shade without blocking views and screening to separate different uses and to diminish the impact of necessary parking. Though windswept, sunny and dry, the site is also susceptible to saltspray and wave damage, not to mention the browsing of deer. The plant choices will necessarily be limited to hardy natives.

There must be resolution of safety issues, such as the sinkholes over some buried gun emplacements, the rusted roof supports on the Battery Commander's Position and the bank erosion where the cable hut slid down the western bluff to the beach. Throughout the plan, maintenance needs must be carefully considered so that suitable staffing and procedures can be provided to ensure that the park remains inviting both summer and winter.

We recommend that the Town develop a request for proposals (or consider this report to be such) for a land use analysis and plan for Fort Getty Park. The 2005-2006 budget recently approved by the council provides \$30,000 for this effort.

This committee, while offering suggestions and thoughts about the organization of uses at the park, defers to the recommendations in such a plan. We do however include in our recommendations suggested funding to implement a land use plan. Our schedule of capital improvements allots resources to develop and install landscape elements, including plantings, to reorganize parking of cars, boats and trailers and vehicular circulation throughout the park, to begin improvements to the 5.4 acres south of the gate house and to conduct an analysis of the fortifications as historical artifacts.

4 Park Management

Currently the “management” of Fort Getty, the park and the campground, is a combined effort of the Recreation Director, the Parks superintendent who is on call and supervises maintenance, the part time recreation clerk and the gate house supervisor who monitor reservations and activity. There has not particularly been a need for waterfront management. Management of the campground alone warrants additional man hours and focus. Reservations are made year round. Between March and October the clerical burden alone warrants additional staffing for the Recreation Department. We believe that there should be a “go to” person for Fort Getty, a manager whose full time efforts from March through October are dedicated to the campground and the park at Fort Getty. The committee has also considered that Fort Getty might support the introduction of a Park Ranger or Warden who could help to police all the uses of the park.

In addition we welcome the clarification of regulations at the campground as to the orientation and boundary of sites. We also recommend that the policy of accommodating “over flow” the acceptance of RV’s without reservations and locating them at the north parking lot by the ramp should be discontinued.

Of the other regulations at the park, we urge that signage be developed to organize parking, particularly at South Beach, the Boat Ramp and the Pavilion. We suggest that no alcoholic beverages should be allowed on the dock. We recommend that signs be erected north of the marsh restricting activities there (such as no bicycles, motorcycles, no shellfishing. We also urge that the north and west sides of the dock be marked as reserved for fishing

Capital Improvements:

The following Capital Improvement Plan was developed as an outcome of the problems and opportunities presented in the previous section. In going through that exercise of identifying problems and opportunities of the park and with the knowledge that the residents of Jamestown want increased use of the park, it became evident what changes and improvements were necessary and desired at the park. The capital improvements involve program as well as infrastructure improvements and encompass improvements to the recreational programs, camping, restroom, pavilion, fortifications, trails, boating and fishing facilities. The intention of these recommendations is to provide the Town with not only a plan for action at the park but a guide for budgeting purposes for the next five years.