

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
December 24, 2007

A special meeting of the Jamestown Town Council was called to order at the Jamestown Town Hall, 93 Narragansett Avenue at 10:30 a.m. by Council President Julio J. DiGiando. The following members were present:

Michael G. White, Vice President
William A. Kelly
Robert W. Sutton, Jr.
Barbara A. Szepatowski

also present:

Bruce R. Keiser, Town Administrator
Peter D. Ruggiero, Town Solicitor
Arlene D. Petit, Town Clerk

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

The Council may seek to go in Executive Session to discuss the following items:

- 1) Pursuant to RIGL42-46-5(a) (5) real estate (acquisition of property)

Council President DiGiando announced that the Council would not go into executive session, but rather, would discuss the subject matter in open session.

Council President DiGiando noted that he was informed by Quentin Anthony, President of the Conanicut Island Land Trust that the Land Trust was not able to provide the \$2,100,000 funding for the protection and preservation of the farmland as anticipated. Mr. Anthony cited that the money raised was to be used for not only the protection and preservation of the farmland but also the view shed. With the contract language allowing for the possible building of a farm building in the easement, President DiGiando stated that the Land Trust indicated that they would not provide funding unless the specific possibility of any building in the easement was removed and disallowed.

The Council discussed the purpose of the farmland preservation program as outlined by the Agricultural Lands Preservation Commission. That being, to protect the agricultural viability of the land, its natural resources, the preservation and quality of the water supply, and to provide opportunity to preserve the scenic features and open space.

Councilor Sutton noted that any farm structure built must first be reviewed and approved by the Agricultural Lands Preservation Commission. However, Councilor Sutton stated the farmland protection act is not meant to protect view sheds at the expense of sustainable farming.

The Town Administrator noted that as with any construction, it would be necessary to consider Zoning and Planning regulations.

With the loss of funding from the Land Trust, the Council discussed with the Town Solicitor a

resolution that would clearly define the bonding of \$3,000,000 as authorized by the special financial town meeting on September 18, 2007. The resolution entitled “*RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ISSUANCE OF BONDS AND NOTES FOR ACQUISITION OF REAL ESTATE*” would allow for the additional sum of \$1,400,000 to be borrowed and the issuance of bonds, taking into account the \$1,600,000 previously authorized by Resolution No. 07-22.

The Town Administrator noted that a private donor contributed \$330,000 through the Nature Conservancy towards the purchase of the development rights of the Neale Farm. The State has committed to providing the balance of the funding needed for the preservation and protection of the farmland in the Town of Jamestown.

Councilor Kelly stated that he was concerned that the unexpected need for additional bonding of \$1,400,000 would affect the Town of Jamestown’s future needs. There was also some concern raised regarding the tax liabilities to donors to the Land Trust that anticipated their monies being used in 2007 for the specific purpose of purchasing the development rights to the Neale and Dutra farms. The Town Administrator stated that donations could be made to the Nature Conservancy for direct payment to the Town to off-set the additional funding by the Town.

The Town Administrator noted that the increase in borrowing and issuance of bonds would increase the tax rate by approximately \$.06 per \$1,000.

It was moved by Councilor Szepatowski, seconded by Councilor Sutton to approve the resolution prepared by Bond Counsel authorizing the issuance of bonds and notes for the acquisition of real estate. So unanimously voted.

It was the consensus of the Council to include on the January 14 Council agenda the request of a letter to RIDEM formally thanking them for their assistance in the preservation and protection of Jamestown farmland.

It was the consensus of the Council to schedule a special meeting for Friday, December 28 at 10:30 a.m.

There being no further business before the Council, it was moved by Councilor White, seconded by Council Szepatowski to adjourn the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Attest:

Arlene D. Petit
Town Clerk

c: Town Council Members (5)
Town Administrator

Town Solicitor
Administrative Circulation