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Trillo suing East Greenwich Yacht Club

By Chris Keegan
Associate Editor

State Rep. says club breached contract, damaged his reputation

A Warwick state legislator, who co-sponsored legislation in January to create a new statewide mooring fee, is seeking \$499,600 in alleged damages from the East Greenwich Yacht Club.



Rep. Trillo

Joseph A. Trillo (R-Dist. 24) of Warwick, whose district includes Potowomut, filed a civil lawsuit against the club, located

at 10 Water St., in November, after he was kicked out of the members-only organization. He seeks damages for alleged breach of contract, damage to his reputation and deprivation of his constitutional rights, among other claims.

In January, Trillo co-sponsored a bill with Rep. Scott A. Slater (D-Dist. 10) of Providence that would have created a new statewide mooring fee between \$150 and \$500. The fees would have gone to the state Department of

Environmental Management for the purpose of maintaining harbor access and safety, though the state agency had no role in the bill's creation and did not support it.

The bill, which was met with confusion and concern from area harbor masters, was withdrawn at the co-sponsors' request March 11.

In his lawsuit, Trillo – a 12-year member of the yacht club – said he was on a waiting list for the 2014 summer season that gives priority to

members on a seniority basis. His 59-foot boat, *Trillory*, was in storage at the club during the 2013-14 winter season.

The lawsuit claims the yacht club's manager, Matthew G. Jarbeau, asked Trillo to move his boat to its summer slip in Greenwich Cove by May 5, but Trillo said one of two engines was not working and needed to be repaired.

Jarbeau reportedly offered to tow Trillo's boat using a skiff. During the tow, the lawsuit alleges the yacht club employee

lost control of Trillo's vessel, and claims Jarbeau threatened to untie the lawmaker's boat in open waters following a verbal altercation.

On May 5, a yacht club committee conducted a hearing on the incident and reportedly suspended Trillo's membership.

In August, Jarbeau went to East Greenwich Police, following a second verbal altercation involving Trillo on Block Island. Jarbeau told police Trillo had allegedly been "verbally

abusive and confrontational in the past," and recounted the May incident. Police advised Jarbeau he could apply for a restraining order.

On Aug. 27, Trillo was reportedly notified of a second yacht club hearing, and he was kicked out of the club Sept. 23.

The lawsuit claims the club engaged in a breach of contract by imposing disciplinary actions outside of the scope of its authority, and allowed an employee who allegedly lacked proper licensing to tow his boat from the club. Trillo is seeking damages in

Trillo/A4

NORTH KINGSTOWN

Air Museum will reopen after collapse

By Patrick O'Brien
Staff Writer

Quonset Air Museum officials said they plan to reopen June 1, despite a partial roof collapse March 14, caused by the excessive weight of snow and ice. They also said they are searching for a new location.

The museum, 488 Eccleston Ave., North Kingstown, was closed for the season, and no one was in the building when the collapse occurred.

Dave Payne, president and executive director, said the damage was discovered during a daily walk through and affected a back storage area and workroom. No aircraft or archives were damaged during the collapse. The museum building was constructed in

Museum/A5

Local reaction to governor's budget mixed

By Independent Staff

Governor Raimondo's \$8.63 billion budget has been met with mixed reviews statewide, with some organizations skeptical, even concerned, that some changes proposed in the budget might hurt their organizations financially, while others remain optimistic about increased funding and re-allocation of resources.

In her first budget address to lawmakers March 12, Raimondo called for more spending on education, business tax credits and other job-creating initiatives. The budget seeks to eliminate a \$190 million deficit

Budget/A4

Stepping up



PHOTO: MICHAEL DERR

Rocky Hill School eighth-grader Jared Lind attends a performance by the Tri Na Nog Irish step dancers Friday as part of the school's St. Patrick's Day celebration.

EAST GREENWICH

Sarah's Trace homeowners testify in case against town

By Chris Keegan
Associate Editor

WARWICK — The shaking was so sudden Christopher Lamendola thought an earthquake was moving his East Greenwich home.

Lamendola, chief technology officer at a family-owned chemical manufacturing company in Coventry, had been building shelves on a Friday in November 2009 when he felt the tremors.

"I think we're having an earthquake," Lamendola recalled telling his wife, Susan, who also felt the vibrations and came running.

He walked outside, and through the autumn tree line, Lamendola said he observed heavy construction equipment moving earth around the site of the future Archie R. Cole Middle School. He whistled over to a construction worker from the edge of his property line, he said.

"I said, 'My house is shaking,' [and] he gave me the finger," Lamendola remarked matter-of-factly.

Lamendola was the first homeowner to testify Monday, the ninth day of a Kent County Superior Court trial over alleged damages to three homes on Sarah's Trace.

The plaintiffs – the Lamendolas of 50 Sarah's Trace, Thomas Hogan and Cynthia Peloso of 40 Sarah's Trace and Keith and Wendy Amelotte of 35 Sarah's Trace – claim their homes were cracked and damaged during the construction of the middle school over a two-year span, beginning in 2009. The couples are seeking monetary damages related to nuisance, negligence and property rights claims; defendants in the case include the town of East Greenwich, the school district and companies involved in the school's construction.

The defendants claim the middle school was built according to industry standards,

Homeowners/A5

NORTH KINGSTOWN

Pughe steps down as NK Chamber director

By Patrick O'Brien
Staff Writer

After three years at the helm, Martha Pughe has announced her resignation as the executive director of North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce.

"I am very proud of the work the board and the staff and I have been able to accomplish. Although the scope of work is vast, the end results are very satisfying," Pughe said.

"The Board of Directors credits Ms. Pughe's energy and enthusiasm for the expanded programming and activity at

the Chamber and appreciates all that she has done to make the Chamber what it is today," the Chamber board said in a press release.

Pughe has accepted a position in the Training Department of General Dynamics Electric Boat. Currently acquiring the necessary security clearances, Pughe expects to begin in early April. Pughe said she will work in both the Groton and Quonset locations, creating curriculum and training for Electric Boat's supervisors and managers.

"I'm definitely looking forward to it," Pughe said.

The position is similar to a job as a social worker she had 20 years ago in Rochester, New York, she said.

"It's one of my passions; it is something I have always kept a very close eye on," she said. "It's something that I have followed throughout my career. I am very excited to do this. It's a natural progression in who I am and where my passions lie."

Pughe, who was formerly the director of Laymen in North Kingstown Schools, called LINKS, took the Chamber job in



PHOTO: MICHAEL DERR

North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Martha Pughe, right, resigned from her position last week.

Pughe/A5

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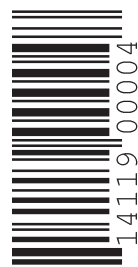
NOT DONE YET

The University of Rhode Island Men's Basketball team gets off to a strong start in the NIT, knocks off Iona. B1



SPECIAL SECTION

Inside this week's edition, a special "Fifty Plus" section. Learn tips and tricks that can help you live the happiest and healthiest lifestyle after the age of 50.



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QUONSET BUSINESS PARK

Ballfields will be added to Quonset

By James Bessette
Special to The Independent

The crack of the bat and the roar of the crowd will soon become a reality in one portion of Quonset Business Park.

The Quonset Development Corporation Board of Directors approved, on a 9-1 vote, the construction and leasing of a soon-to-be-built multi-use athletic field on a 22-acre parcel of land in Davisville Tuesday evening.

Board member James Berson dissented. Board member Gregory Mancini arrived late and was not in attendance at the time of the vote.

The land, located near Babcock Road, Cross Park Avenue and Newcomb Road, will be leased to the town of North Kingstown for 50 years at \$1 per year and can be outfitted with up to four baseball fields or multiple soccer fields at the discretion of the Park and Recreation Department, according to QDC Managing Director Steven King.

King also confirmed the North Kingstown Town Council approved the agreement March 19 and once it has been executed, Town Manager Michael Embury can begin to pursue the design and construction, which are anticipated to cost \$800,000. Half of the cost will be paid for by a grant the town will receive from the state Department of Environmental Management. The remaining costs will be split between the town and QDC. The town will maintain the facility, after QDC installs new grass.

King said the land to be used used to be a U.S. Army Nike missile site, where missiles were stored in silos underground, but that has since been demolished. Because of that, there is known groundwater contamination.

The QDC expects to receive a favorable ruling on a human health risk assessment from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. King said the groundwater – which is approximately 50-60 feet below the surface near the bedrock – will have no impact on the area as long as it remains deep below the earth.

“The DEM has assured me that there is no concern with the groundwater in terms of recreational use,” King said. “We know that the groundwater is impacted by chemicals of concern. Point of being, we can’t consume the groundwater. We don’t need to use it and we’re not going to use it for irrigation.”

Upon the contingencies of receiving an OK from the Army Corps of Engineers, King said construction on the land is slated to begin this summer and have the grass on the field grow this fall.

J. Goodison to Expand

In 2001, Jack and Jamie Goodison started their marine industry company with just a utility van and a vision to become a prominent business within North Kingstown.

Fifteen years and a \$13-million industry later, J. Goodison Co. will continue to expand, thanks to a unanimous vote from the QDC Board of Directors Tuesday evening.

The board approved terms of a new lease with the company for two parcels of land, just over 7 acres, along Zarbo Avenue. The lease allows the company to have a shipyard with a travel lift to repair commercial and military vessels. Part of that land is where a steam plant was once located.

Walter Valencia, a representative of J. Goodison Co., said the parcel will accommodate up to 12 boats, depending on their size, with a weight capacity of 900 tons. Valencia said the company will add a \$3.5-million boat lift to remove boats from the bay, so they can be repaired on land.

Valencia projected company sales could reach \$15 million in the next few years and the company has begun hiring additional employees, with plans to add up to 50 welders, electricians and machinists with salaries ranging from \$45,000 to \$75,000.

Valencia said there will be a “spill-over” of economic benefits for North Kingstown, as well as an expanded tax base to the town, the state and federal governments.

The initial term of the lease is 20 years, King said, and the annual rent will be a little over \$199,000, with an escalation beyond the fifth year to be negotiated.

The QDC is building a \$7 million replacement of the sea wall along Zarbo Avenue, a job scheduled to be finished by the end of November. The site cannot be accessed by the public or tenants – including J. Goodison – while the project is ongoing. King said J. Goodison Co. is expected to take custody of the site in December. King also said financing, project and business plans must still be finalized before the J. Goodison lease is fully executed.

a new marine safety patrol division of law enforcement.

“There’s nothing in the legislation that’s going to affect the East Greenwich Yacht Club,” Trillo said. “...How can that be retaliation?”

Trillo acknowledged that he “told off” Jarbeau on Block Island, but said the May and August incidents occurred in waters outside of the club’s jurisdiction. He defended his right to free speech as a private citizen.

“I can’t tell you off because I’m [also] a politician?” Trillo said. “I have constitutional rights, too. It’s called free speech.”

Trillo said he believes the May incident was an excuse to remove him from the club’s waiting list.

“The people at the East Greenwich Yacht Club are upset with me,” he said. “They’re out to hurt me politically.”

A legislator since 2000, Trillo said he has offered a number of marine-related bills during his time in the General Assembly, including one that requires sewage-holding tanks on boats to be certified. The intent of the mooring fee bill is to prevent out-of-state boaters from taking up mooring space that Rhode Islanders could be using, he said.

“I’ve done a lot to protect boaters,” Trillo said.

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Clown Town took over St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in East Greenwich Saturday. Above, Julia Krum, 2, of Warwick enjoys her balloon animal made by Bob Aubin (aka Bobo the Clown). Below, Gaby Medina, 6, of East Greenwich plays a game during the festivities.

Keep clowning around

Photos: Michael Derr



Budget

Continued from A1

while implementing no new broad-based taxes. Her plan is for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

“The budget is a good budget in light of difficult circumstances,” said House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello. “We start out with roughly a \$200 million deficit and it’s got to be balanced, so your choices are always going to be difficult. But I believe, with my broad overview of the budget, that it is a pro-economy, pro-jobs, pro-business budget and therefore, I’m very optimistic that it’ll be something that helps all of our citizens.”

Reductions in Medicaid

Raimondo proposed closing the deficit largely through spending cuts. The state Department of Health and Human Services faces the largest cut, nearly \$94 million.

Thirty cents of every dollar in that department’s budget is spent on Medicaid. Raimondo has charged a 28-member group with “reinventing Medicaid” by cutting costs and improving services, which she estimates will save \$46 million. She asked for an additional \$45 million cut from the state Health and Human Services budget. A 5 percent rate increase in Medicaid fees for hospitals would be cut, along with a 3 percent rate increase in fees for nursing homes.

South County Hospital’s President and CEO Louis R. Giancola expressed concern about proposed changes. He said taking those resources away, particularly from Medicaid patients, who are often the most needy, could be “damaging.”

“Clearly, we’re concerned about the 5 percent reduction in hospital fees for Medicaid patients,” he said. “Approximately 5 to 10 percent of our patients are sponsored by Medicaid, so any reduction represents a loss of resources, particularly at a time when we’re trying to be more proactive in the community to prevent disease and promote health.”

Giancola expressed some hope Raimondo will look for other ways to reduce the cost of Medicaid patient care.

“I know there’s a strong belief that if we manage the care of patients more effectively, then we can reduce utilization, and reduce costs in that manner,” he said.

“The Hospital Association of Rhode Island and its members applaud Governor Raimondo’s commitment to transforming our health care delivery system,” said Michael R. Souza, president of Hospital Association of Rhode Island, in a news release. “Unfortunately, hospitals will face \$54 million in cuts that will further destabilize fragile hospitals employing nearly 20,000 health care

professionals. We are grateful the Governor recognizes the need for long-term solutions and look forward to working with the Working Group to Reinvent Medicaid to identify changes that will provide Rhode Islanders with quality health care while controlling costs.”

The association is a statewide trade organization that assists member hospitals with advocacy, representation, education and services.

Tourism

While overspending in some areas, Raimondo said the state isn’t spending enough on a statewide tourism strategy or on economic development agency budgets and personnel. She allocated \$4.5 million for a statewide tourism campaign, which would include consolidating regional tourism boards into one statewide umbrella.

Myrna George, president and CEO of South County Tourism Council, said she liked the idea of the state Division of Tourism retaining control over the regional offices, but expressed concern that some tourism offices might receive more funding than others.

“We were glad to see the state Division of Tourism would be the umbrella that’s dedicated to tourism,” George said. “However, the response in the governor’s budget – it’s not terribly clear – but it apparently does a good deal of damage to some of the regions, but not all. What is troubling under the formula, is it’s not clear how the money is to be distributed. If in fact there is a discussion about doing consolidation, then it should be equal across the board.”

She noted statewide tourism funding has faced cuts in the past several years, and regional tourism boards have stepped in to raise their own revenues.

“For the past decade South County and its 11 towns, which is the largest geographical area of the tourism district in Rhode Island, increased their revenues by 12.29 percent,” she said. “What will happen if suddenly, the tourism industry is wholly under the umbrella of the state? Are we to expect a steady erosion of all of the regional work and have it redistributed to just a couple [areas]?”

Second home tax

Raimondo also proposed raising nearly \$12 million by implementing a statewide property tax on second homes worth more than \$1 million, and another \$7 million by increasing the cigarette tax by 25 cents. This proposal was quickly nicknamed the “Taylor Swift tax,” referencing the pop singer who owns a home in Watch Hill.

Melanie Delman, president of Lila Delman Real Estate, criticized the proposed surcharges on non-owner

occupied homes and million-plus valuations as sacrificing long-term revenue for short-term boosts. She hopes to have the governor visit for a front-porch chat about her proposal.

“We’d love to have a discussion about it, because obviously we think it’s harmful,” Delman said. “This is a state where people are leaving because of the estate tax, and other things like that. This doesn’t help the middle class at all, it just takes money out of their pockets as well.”

“We think it’s a poor way to raise revenue, and it’ll ultimately make the state lose revenue,” Delman continued. “If we’re encouraging tourism, how does this help? We’re turning away people who want to have a home here, and spend their summers in Rhode Island.”

Delman wrote an opinion piece on the firm’s blog opposing the budget proposal.

“It’s difficult to understand the logic in imposing new state-level taxes on property owners just as the economically important housing sector begins to recover,” she wrote. “Being an important second home and tourist destination is significant to Rhode Island’s economy and we continually work to position ourselves against the more recognized Hamptons, Cape Cod, Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard. The measures to increase taxes on second homes and rentals certainly would do harm to furthering that effort.”

While the governor’s budget calls for raising about \$11.8 million via the new tax, Delman said this would be “dwarfed by the amount of money that will be lost” by discouraging additional home ownership.

“It’s not about us in the luxury real estate market; it’s about keeping people in Rhode Island and not separating us into groups,” Delman said. “We’ve been here for 50 years, we’re a local small business, and we’re all about promoting Rhode Island as a state and getting people to consider it. It’s more about making good decisions to make the state healthy, and not always going after the rich, or what’s perceived as rich.”

Investing in education

Among the new initiatives, Raimondo also has proposed spending \$20 million to rebuild and modernize schools and \$1.4 million to offer full-day kindergarten in every community. Seven communities currently do not have universal full-day kindergarten: North Kingstown, East Greenwich, Coventry, Cranston, Johnston, Tiverton and Warwick.

“I was really encouraged to hear that [Raimondo] said it’s time to do it,” North Kingstown Superintendent Phil Auger said. “I completely agree with her on that. We have it as part of our budget proposal now.”

Auger said his district has

proposed all-day kindergarten district-wide in fiscal year 2015-16, at a cost of \$550,000. That equals approximately 1 percent of the 3.2 percent tax levy increase the school department requested from the town.

The district will be awarded \$70,000 in state aid for start-up funds through the state Department of Education, Auger said, adding larger districts, such as Cranston, would receive more of the money than North Kingstown because of size and need.

“A lot of it is still unknown, but I love the sentiment,” he said.

East Greenwich Superintendent Victor Mercurio said it would be “wait and see” at this point in regard to funding full-day kindergarten.

“As it relates to where dollars play out as it relates to the Governor’s vision, that’s still an unknown at this point,” Mercurio said.

The budget proposes a nearly \$400,000 increase in state school funding for East Greenwich as well, for a total of \$2.8 million, to help pay for the high cost of special education. If that funding comes through, the East Greenwich School District’s proposed budget will remain the same; but the amount of revenue needed from the town will be reduced.

The Governor’s budget proposal also would eliminate the requirement for school districts to pay to bus students to out-of-district parochial schools, as well as cost of textbooks for said schools. Statewide, this would save districts more than \$2 million.

Mercurio said the cost saving to East Greenwich for busing could be anywhere from \$65,000 to \$75,000. The additional savings for textbooks could be \$10,000.

“A number of x’s and y’s have not been determined yet,” Mercurio said. “[As] we always do at this time, we will continue to monitor the situation very closely, but we are going to continue to pay attention to and report back any good news as it relates to our own request to the municipality.”

Auger said North Kingstown could see as much as \$80,000 in savings if the busing requirement is eliminated.

“It would be something that we would prefer,” Auger said. “When you think the full day [kindergarten] is \$550,000, that could cut that back a little bit. Every little thing helps. It would help the public school system make ends meet.”

Auger said he is optimistic about the proposal, but the school department’s proposed budget is already in the hands of the town, and that budget will be finalized in early May. The state budget is not typically approved until late June.

With reports from the Associated Press.

REGION

NORTH KINGSTOWN

NK man convicted of raping 17-year-old

By **Stephen Greenwell Jr.**
Staff Writer

A North Kingstown man has been found guilty of sexually assaulting a 17-year-old Coventry girl, following a jury trial in Kent County Superior Court, the state Office of the Attorney General announced Monday.

Stephen Mulcahey, 42, 15 Ranger Road, North Kingstown, at the time of his arrest, was found guilty of first-degree sexual assault after two

and a half hours of deliberation. Sentencing is scheduled for May 15. It is a capital offense – the minimum sentence is 10 years, the maximum sentence is life in prison.

According to the attorney general's office, Mulcahey committed the assault Oct. 27, 2013. The girl reported it to her parents the next day, and they notified Coventry Police. Mulcahey was arrested Oct. 31, 2013 and he has been held without bail at the Adult Correctional Institutions in Cranston since his arrest.

A separate case against Mulcahey – possession of child pornography – has not yet been adjudicated. A computer was seized from his home at the time of his arrest, according to State Police Major Todd E. Catlow, and additional charges were filed after a search of its contents. Catlow said the computer contained pornography with a "juvenile known to him from previous contact."

According to online judiciary records, Mulcahey has more than a dozen past

misdemeanor arrests, dating back to 1997. In September 1998, he was found guilty by a jury of third-degree sexual assault and ordered to serve a five-year suspended sentence with probation. According to a 1999 Supreme Court decision that denied his appeal of his conviction, at the time, the 23-year-old Mulcahey had consensual sex with a 15-year-old.

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SOUTH KINGSTOWN

SC Hospital will get new operating room

By **Stephanie Turaj**
Staff Writer

South County Hospital received unanimous approval from the South Kingstown Planning Board March 10 to construct a sixth operating room at its Kenyon Avenue facility in Wakefield.

The additional 690-square-foot room will result in a total addition of approximately 2,200 square feet to the northeast corner of the existing 20,327-square-foot surgical

pavilion at 100 Kenyon Avenue. The operating room would be "state of the art" and designed to handle complex surgeries such as total joint replacements and spinal surgery, hospital officials said.

Hospital staff have called the project "a high priority" because of an increasing demand for surgeries, particularly the more complex surgeries, which cannot be met within the existing configuration.

"We are so fortunate to have the hospital in our

community, and it's one we should be proud of," board member Ken Kenerson said. Other board members echoed his sentiments.

Abutters expressed some concern about how close the facility would be to their properties, and the environmental aesthetic of the view.

Board members stipulated the addition would have to include landscaping similar to what is currently there. Hospital staff noted there is no more room to expand the facility

toward Kenyon Avenue and there are no plans to do so.

South County Hospital has not made any major changes to its main facility since 2008, when the 60-bed Frost Family Pavilion was completed. Last year, hospital officials explored a possible affiliation with Massachusetts-based Southcoast Health System, but ultimately decided against it.

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NARRAGANSETT

Hodgson named Narragansett town solicitor

By **Stephen Greenwell Jr.**
Staff Writer

Former state Senator Dawson Hodgson has been named Narragansett Town Solicitor. Hodgson served two terms as the senator from East Greenwich, North Kingstown, Narragansett and South Kingstown, before making an unsuccessful run for attorney general against incumbent Peter Kilmartin last year.

He replaces Mark McSally, who served as the town's legal adviser for 27 years.

Hodgson was not at the March 2 Narragansett Town Council meeting for the appointment. Reached by phone the following day, he said he had been sworn in that morning at Town Hall and was in

the "unique position" to take the job, because his caseload had decreased as he focused on legislative matters.

Hodgson, 36, said following his loss to Kilmartin last fall, he was aware Narragansett had not reappointed McSally yet, and submitted his name for consideration.

"I'm really looking forward to using my experience as an attorney and an elected official to help the Narragansett Town Council accomplish their goals," he said. "I'm very aware of the broad scope of the job and how important it is to the operation and prosperity of the town."

During the election cycle, the executive director of the Rhode Island Democratic Party filed an ethics complaint

against Hodgson, claiming he failed to divulge positions he held with his family's turf business, Sodco in Slocum. Asked about the complaint, Hodgson said a hearing is scheduled for Tuesday.

"There have been no findings by the board yet, and obviously I'm contesting that complaint," he said. "There is a major difference between a clerical error and willing violation of the ethics code."

Hodgson said he anticipated "shouldering much more of the individual workload" when staffing meetings. The town has used assistant solicitors for Municipal and Probate courts, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Review meetings.

"There likely will be assistant

solicitors, but I haven't determined that yet," Hodgson said.

Hodgson cited his experience as a state senator, and as a prosecutor in Washington County, as reasons for his interest in the job.

"I represented Narragansett as part of District 35, so I've gotten to know the community very well that way," he said. "When I was with the Attorney General's office, my last 18 months were at the Washington County courthouse. The role of a town solicitor is certainly a very large one, and it's a very exciting mix of subject matter for an attorney."

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Pughe

Continued from A1

2012, during a time of transition. In 2011, the entire five-member Executive Committee resigned amid apparent infighting over how funds were being spent. In 2010 there had been talks of merging with the East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce, as both Chambers had decreased membership and revenue. Pughe had served on the Chamber board for nine months when she was appointed to replace Karla Driscoll, who served as the Chamber's executive director for 24 years before her retirement.

The search for her replacement at the Chamber is underway, according to Chairman Peter Atkin.

Filling the position promptly is important to the board, Atkin said, though there is the balance between getting someone in soon and finding the most qualified candidate.

"We're not going to sacrifice

quality for the sake of expediency, and we're not going to sacrifice expediency to hope someone turns up months from now," Atkin said.

He said they hoped to have someone in place prior to the April 29 annual meeting. The Chamber is contemplating job description changes, he said, but from the work Pughe performed, they don't anticipate many.

"Martha has brought such a good change to the Chamber. She has directed the Chamber onto the path of success in terms of defining us in a way that the board feels we want to be defined," Atkin said. "In many ways, we are just looking to expand on what Martha has established and bringing on the economic development that all of us hope and wish for."

Atkin credits Pughe with the advancement of educational opportunities for Chamber members. The Chamber has co-sponsorship agreements with the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Center for Women & Enterprise

and hosts approximately 40 educational programs.

Under her leadership, the Chamber became a leading agency advocating for businesses in North Kingstown, Pughe said.

"We've truly become the voice of businesses," she said. "I'm extremely proud of some of the work we have done on the Chamber of Commerce. I'm proud of my work with the board of directors. The board has changed from an operational board to a strategic and planning board, and has [created a] good foundation for the Chamber to move forward. I'm really proud of the work we have done. I think the business community in North Kingstown is in a very good place right now."

Pughe said she will provide logistical support during the transition, but believes the new director should not have to worry about her hanging on, making the job more difficult.

"I just don't feel it's the right way to have a new director

take over an organization," she said. "You have to give the new director the opportunity to put their stamp on it and not feel inhibited in any way by the past director. My philosophy is that when a new director comes in, they really need to feel that it is theirs, and they can move ahead in a way they, along with the board, feels is the right way to go."

Pughe said she has been surprised and humbled by the amount of town employees who have congratulated her on the new job.

"It has been the utmost pleasure to work with them, to really collaborate with them," she said.

The North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting will be held April 29 at Quidnessett Country Club. Newly appointed Rhode Island Commerce Secretary Stefan Pryor will be the guest speaker.

Staff writer Chris Church contributed to this story.

Museum

Continued from A1

1945 as a U.S. Naval Air Station Quonset Point hangar and was used as a paint shop during World War II.

"The hell with the damage; I'm glad no one got hurt," Payne said. "We were lucky."

In addition to the roof collapse, the museum's website states concerns with the integrity of the hangar roof and south hangar doors. The need to relocate to another building has been known for some time, Payne said.

"We are negotiating with the state right at the moment to

get a piece of property that we can move to," Payne said.

Payne said the museum has been working with the Rhode Island Airport Corporation to raise money to acquire a new property in Quonset for the museum.

"This is Quonset Naval Air Station; it is where it belongs," Payne said. "It's going to be a better museum. We're in a good shape. I'm kind of excited. [Rhode Island Airport Corp.] has been so helpful, they are an unbelievable group of people. They have been with me all the way – we are in contact daily on the phone and that's very helpful to have."

Founded in 2002, the 501 (c) (3) organization showcases Rhode Island aviation history through archival exhibitions, aircraft restorations, education and research. There are 28 different aircraft on display or under restoration, dating to 1944. The 1983 F-14 Tomcat, made famous in the 1986 Tom Cruise hit movie, "Top Gun," is one of the key attractions. Aircraft restorations are completed by volunteers and works-in-progress are displayed next to restored aircraft throughout the museum. Guided tours led by former military pilots have been offered in the past.

The museum attempts to

restore aircraft to appear as they did during their final flight. Included in the collection is the last aircraft to fly from Quonset Naval Air Station, a C-1A COD BU#136792, a one-of-a-kind Twin Tail Navy transport plane. The museum also includes a re-creation of the 8th Air Force Ready Room, a Nike missile and a drone.

Payne said they plan to re-open June 1, with aircraft outside on display, and the museum room inside, featuring military artifacts such as uniforms, helmets and documents.

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Homeowners

Continued from A1

and the work never posed a threat to surrounding properties. Paul Callaghan, lawyer for defendant Gilbane Building Company, told jurors the damages were the result of natural processes, such as settlement and the expansion and contraction of materials used to construct the homes.

As of Tuesday afternoon, more than 100 documents, including emails, technical reports and photographs, had been entered as exhibits by the plaintiffs' lawyer, David E. Maglio, and the defendants' lawyers, and will be available to the jury during deliberations.

The trial is expected to continue into next week.

From the witness stand, Lamendola said the vibrations he experienced continued into December and early 2010, and could often be felt in the floors and windows of the house, which was built in 1997. He continued to view construction work from his property line when he felt the house shaking, and recalled lying in bed one morning when the tremors began abruptly.

"The pulls on the dresser were ringing like bells on Christmas morning," he said.

Jurors saw home video footage Monday of a dining room chandelier inside the Lamendola home swaying slowly, dishes clattering and dresser drawer handles swinging back and forth, as construction work could be heard at the school site several hundred feet away. The video was played without audio at times, so that jurors could not hear Lamendola narrating what he was observing.

Alarmed and unsure what to expect, Lamendola said he reached out to members of the East Greenwich Town Council and the School Committee as he began to see cracks on interior walls and his backyard basketball court. He filed two complaints with local police, and in January, he and his wife began noting vibrations as they occurred on a wall calendar.

Project officials set up seismic monitors on the school property, and paid for condition surveys at the plaintiffs' homes in 2010 to document the reported problems. Follow-up surveys performed later in the year appeared to show new damage at 40 and 50 Sarah's Trace, though Brian Newberry – the lawyer for defendants Strategic Building Solutions LLC, Symmes Maini & McKee Associates and Paul B. Aldinger & Associates – suggested last week that furniture may have blocked full views of walls and ceilings during the initial surveys.

Lamendola said he later found chunks of concrete from the side of the pool sitting at the bottom, cracks on an outdoor pizza oven, nails sticking out of exterior clapboards of his home and sinking in his garage floor. In April 2010, construction work continued into the night for a period of time, and Lamendola said workers "used machines that sounded like an airplane was taking off." In June, the vibrations felt "violent" on some

days as old cracks grew and new cracks formed, he said.

"Living in a house with shaking and moving...[is] frightening. It's nothing I've ever experienced before," Lamendola said.

The shaking continued intermittently into 2011, when the former junior high at the site was demolished.

Under cross-examination by John Donovan, lawyer for Manafort Brothers Inc. construction company, Lamendola acknowledged his family never considered moving and continued using the pool and basketball court during school construction. He also worked to raise doubts about Lamendola's claim the family could not invite people over to the home during the two-year span.

Asked why he had not yet fixed the cracks on his property, Lamendola said he could not afford to.

Susan Lamendola, a parenting consultant and real estate agent, and Thomas Hogan, a senior technical adviser in the optics division at Swarovski, offered similar testimony Tuesday. Peloso and the Amelottes began their testimony Wednesday, as the Independent went to press.

Unusual soils?

Last week, lawyers for the defendants challenged testimony by Dr. David Sykora, the plaintiffs' hired geotechnical engineer, who said the presence of unusual soils under the homes was a key factor in their alleged damage.

Sykora, whose specialties in analyzing vibrations, earthquakes and landslides, said he was initially doubtful that construction vibrations from school site could have damaged surrounding properties.

But after a study of soil data from the school site and the plaintiffs' properties, a review of geological maps and observations, he told jurors that loose silts and sandy soils under the homes presented conditions in which vibrations dissipated at a slower rate – and likely caused subsurface settlement.

The aesthetic problems reported at the homes also are consistent with vibration damage, he noted.

Under cross-examination, Sykora conceded unusual soil conditions were less apparent at 35 Sarah's Trace; that the size of the unusual soil area was never determined; and that seismic monitors were never placed on Sarah's Trace to record ground vibrations.

"Isn't it true that the human body is an excellent detector of vibrations, but a poor measuring device?" Donovan asked, citing from what appeared to be a textbook.

Sykora did not disagree.

On Tuesday, Dr. Lucy Jen, a field engineer who worked with Sykora, testified she experienced the ground shaking during a soil boring at the Lamendola home – one of only three conducted on Sarah's Trace. She also acknowledged soil samples between 27 and 41.6 feet could be not taken because of "running soil," a condition that could have compromised the integrity of the testing.

For daily updates, visit the North East Independent's Facebook page at facebook.com/neindependent.

TOWN OF NORTH KINGSTOWN RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC HEARING

REQUEST FOR A PERMIT TO PERFORM WORK WITHIN 25 FEET OF HISTORICAL CEMETERIES

NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws §23-18-1 and North Kingstown Code of Ordinances §12-15(e) the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown will conduct a Public Hearing at the Beechwood Senior Center, 44 Beach Street, North Kingstown, Rhode Island 02852 at 7:00 P.M. on Monday, March 30, 2015 on the petition of the Saint Bernard's Roman Catholic Church of Wickford, Rhode Island to perform work within twenty-five (25) feet of North Kingstown Historic Cemetery No. 47 (known as George Thomas Burial Plat) on the property located at 275 Tower Hill Road being AP 116, lot 105.

Complete copies of the petition and other pertinent information are available for inspection at the Office of the Town Clerk and the Department of Planning and Development between the hours of 8:30 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. The proposal may be altered or amended prior to the close of the public hearing without further advertising, as a result of further study or because of the views expressed at the public hearing. Any alterations or amendment will be presented for comment in the course of the hearing.

Jeannette Alyward
Town Clerk

THE TOWN OF NORTH KINGSTOWN WILL PROVIDE INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING AT ANY MEETING PROVIDED A REQUEST IS RECEIVED THREE (3) DAYS PRIOR TO SAID MEETING BY CALLING 294-3331, EXT. 122.



South County
Habitat for Humanity
Rhode Island

Building houses, building hope
An affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International



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