

At the Regular Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown, County of Washington, and State of Rhode Island, held in and for said Town, County, and State this 13th day of January, 2025 at the Town Hall Council Chambers, 80 Boston Neck Road, at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT WERE: Gregory A. Mancini, President  
Linnea M. Drew  
Elizabeth Hill Ross  
Matthew B. McCoy  
Dr. Kimberly Ann Page

ALSO PRESENT: A. Ralph Mollis, Town Manager  
Jeannette Alyward, Town Clerk  
Kerry Rollinson, Acting Deputy Town Clerk  
James M. Callaghan, Town Solicitor

An audio recording and video recording of this meeting was made to supplement the written record.

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown held on January 13, 2025 was called to order by President Mancini.

2. Notice of Meeting being posted

Pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-6(c), notice of this meeting has been posted on the Secretary of State's Website.

3. Salute to Flag

President Mancini led those in attendance in a salute to the flag.

President Mancini led those in attendance in a moment of silence in memory of the passing of President Carter; Daniele Arruda, her two children, and unborn child; and the victims of the terrible fires in California.

**I. SPECIAL BUSINESS**

4. Joint Meeting with the School Committee – Discussion of Legislative Priorities with the North Kingstown Legislative Delegation

President Mancini welcomed Representative Craven, Representative Casimiro, Senator Valverde, Senator DiMario, School Committee Vice-Chair Case, School Committee Member Reilly, School Committee Member Kennedy, and School Committee Chair Earle. President Mancini stated that the delegation has been provided with a list of priorities from the Council and School Committee that we hope the delegation will advocate for, specifically aid to education, special ed, Route 4 intersections at Oak Hill Road and Hamilton Allenton Road, as well as the Council's request for enabling legislation for amendments to various North Kingstown tax exemptions.

School Committee Chair Earle thanked the Council for having the School Committee attend tonight to participate in this discussion and had nothing further to add.

President Mancini stated that it would be helpful to hear the challenges of the upcoming state budget and how it may affect school aid particularly unfunded mandates for special ed programs and feels the Town should be reimbursed for those unfunded mandates. Representative Craven stated that he and Representative Casimiro participated in a house caucus where the Speaker gave a thumbnail sketch of where the budget is, and the expectation based on the revenue projects that have been modified by increases to the revenue over the first half of the year. We are at around a \$320 million deficit which started at over \$400 million plus. He would anticipate that the deficit would end up being a \$240 million deficit, which does mean cuts or an increase in taxes, which he believes would be off the table. He further stated that he doesn't believe these cuts will affect state aid.

President Mancini stated it is helpful to know where we are as we are in the budget process. He is concerned that this deficit will affect local aid, and he is hopeful that there will not be a decrease in local aid. However, the cost of education continues to grow, and it is tough to keep good teachers.

Chair Earle stated that they spoke with their administrators prior to tonight's meeting to see what their concerns and priorities were and in addition to what President Mancini has stated regarding special education, they did want us to relay the immense challenges they are having are in the early intervention in the Pre-K aged children. The needs are growing a lot to the point where we are adding additional classrooms and more interventionists; this is taxing our resources where we are having to reduce other resources in our Pre-K programs.

Senator Valverde stated that both she and Senator DiMario have worked on the early intervention funding which has been effective, and they realize that there is more work that needs to be done. They are working with advocates to make some changes to our early intervention programs to allow the option for children who turn 3 to stay in early intervention rather than making a transition to the pre-school special ed program. The details are still being worked out. In answer to President Mancini's question if the Senators are also looking at a funding mechanism for these changes, Senator Valverde stated that a lot is funded through private insurance and Medicaid, which comes with a federal match. President Mancini stated that is a creative way to think about it.

Senator DiMario stated that a couple of years ago the general assembly passed a bill to do a comprehensive study on what was needed for infant and early childhood mental wellness in terms of different types of services and support in Rhode Island by identifying that when we intervene early on it reduces the effects. The results of that report showed that we have a workforce shortage in this area. One of the initiatives that she has been working on is to collaborate with partners in the private sector to be able to come up with a first cohort of professionals that are trained to do this type of interventional work to better support these kids who are in early intervention which is beneficial as they go into kindergarten.

Chair Earle thanked Senators Valverde and DiMario and stated that if there is any data the district can provide, please let them know.

School Committee Member Reilly stated that she thinks it is important to say that she has had several conversations over the past several months with teachers who are in the special ed programs who have relayed that the district has done a wonderful job, but they would like everyone to be aware that there are budgetary needs. From a teacher's perspective when you are required by RIDE or other regulations to do something, but you don't have the budget or resources to do so, there shouldn't be that gap, and asks that the delegation keep in mind that we need the resources and budget.

President Mancini stated that we have submitted a request that the legislators submit legislation to amend some categories for tax exemptions for North Kingstown, and we will also be asking for support for houseboat legislation. He further stated that the complete list and topics that the legislative delegation discussed tonight are priorities.

The Council thanked the delegation and School Committee for attending tonight's meeting.

## **II. PUBLIC HEARING**

### **5. Class C Alcoholic Beverage License and Victualling License (change of location)**

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor McCoy and unanimously

VOTED: To open the Public Hearing.

There was no public comment.

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor McCoy and unanimously

VOTED: To close the Public Hearing.

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor McCoy and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the application for change of location of a Class C Alcoholic Beverage License and Victualling License, expiring on December 1, 2025, from Sweet Marie's LLC, dba Sweet Marie's Tea Cottage, 25 West Main Street, to Sweet Marie's LLC, dba Sweet Marie's Tea Cottage, 7 Main Street, subject to taxes and water paid to date; receipt of a certificate from the Rhode Island Department of Health; receipt of a Rhode Island Retail Sales Tax Permit; and compliance with the recommendations of the Building Official, the Fire Marshall, and the Planning Department.

6. Second Reading – Amendment to Section 11-66

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor McCoy and unanimously

VOTED: To open the Public Hearing.

There was no public comment.

Motion by Councilor McCoy, seconded by Councilor Page and unanimously

VOTED: To close the Public Hearing.

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor McCoy and unanimously

VOTED: To adopt an Ordinance in Amendment of Section 11-66 of the Code of Ordinances, Town of North Kingstown, entitled, "Stop Signs", and that this shall constitute the Second Reading thereof.

President Mancini stated that due to the number of people in attendance, he recommends moving the Manager's Report up prior to Public Comment as it will provide information regarding the roundabout in Wickford.

The Council took Item Number 19 next.

**IV. REPORTS**

19. Report by the Town Manager

Town Manager Mollis gave the following report:

January 13, 2025

**Manager's Report**

A. Ralph Mollis, Town Manager



## Projects/Initiatives

### Revolution Wind Offshore Wind Farm



- Nothing new to report.
- The **Offshore Wind Farm Project** construction continues successfully without any local issues and with significant community outreach by Revolution Wind.
- Our next bi-weekly meeting with them will take place this Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Questions/Concerns? Contact Revolution Wind at (401) 255-2207 or [info@revolution-wind.com](mailto:info@revolution-wind.com) – we receive weekly reports on these matters.

### North Kingstown Police Department Upcoming traffic/speed zone report



- Chief Urban and the North Kingstown Police Department will present a **traffic/speed zone report** for the community, recommendations for implementation, at the next Town Council meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup>.
- I've met with Chief Urban and his team; the report being finalized is comprehensive and will include concrete recommendations by the Department.

- There isn't any new information regarding the Offshore Wind Farm Project being conducted by Revolution Wind. Construction continues successfully without any local issues and with aggressive community outreach by Revolution Wind. Our next bi-weekly meeting with them will take place this Thursday.

Anyone having any questions or concerns are encouraged to contact Revolution Wind at 401-251-2207 or [info@revolution-wind.com](mailto:info@revolution-wind.com). They provide my office with weekly reports on all contacts and how they were resolved.

- Chief Urban and the North Kingstown Police Department will be presenting a traffic/speed zone report for our community with recommendations at your next meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup>. I've met with the Chief and his team and the report they are finalizing will be comprehensive and will include concrete recommendations by the Department.

## Projects/Initiatives

### FY 2024 Audit Finance Department



- The **Fiscal Year 2024 Audit** is expected to be finalized this week. Our hope and plan is to have the Auditors present it to you at the (next) Council meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup>.
  - As mentioned previously, this year's Audit includes continued good news, showing a growing surplus on the Town's balance sheet, a growing surplus on the school's financials, interest income being generated by our surplus which reduces our tax rate and other good news.
  - *My thanks are extended to our Finance Department and to the School's Finance Department on their efforts to provide financials early this year.*

### Allen Harbor Dredging Project



- The **Allen Harbor Dredging Project** is complete.
- *My thanks go out to Steve King of Quonset Development Corporation on our partnership on this important project for our Marina.*

- The Fiscal Year 2024 Audit is expected to be finalized this week, and our hope and plan is to have the Auditors present the Audit to you at your January 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. As I mentioned previously, this year's Audit includes continued good news, showing a growing surplus on the Town's balance sheet, a growing surplus on the school's financials, interest income being generated by our surplus which reduces our tax rate and other good news. My thanks to our Finance Department and the School's Finance Department on their efforts to provide financials early this year.
- I'm also happy to announce that the Allen Harbor Dredging Project is complete. My thanks to Steve King of Quonset Development Corporation on our partnership on this important project benefiting the customers at our Marina.



## Projects/Initiatives

### Holiday Giving Program Senior Center



- The **Senior Center** conducted a very successful **Holiday Giving Program** this past holiday season. *Thank you to all who supported these efforts.*
- The program assisted 123 families with almost 300 children in total. These families received a total of \$12,848 in monetary donations in addition to 21 families being directly 'adopted' by community volunteers, in addition to multiple gifts being provided.
- The 123 participating families and 300 children is approximately a 20% increase from last year's Holiday Giving Program, showing an increasing level of need in our community.

### Mandated Rhode Island Minimum Wage Increase



- I've made significant adjustments to the **Seasonal Employee Salary Tables** due to the state required January 1<sup>st</sup> increase to minimum wage.
- As I've reported in the past, this will have a significant impact on the cost to operate our golf course, seasonal laborers, Allen Harbor, and our Recreation Programs, including Summer Camps.
  - The financial impact of these adjustments will be more detailed and evident in our upcoming budget process.

- The Senior Center conducted a very successful Holiday Giving Program this past season. This program assisted 123 families and almost 300 children. They received \$12,848 in monetary donations in addition to 21 families directly adopted plus multiple donated toys. The 123 families and 300 children are approximately a 20% increase over last year, showing a growing need in our community.
- I want to inform the Town Council that I've made significant adjustments to the Seasonal Employee Salary Tables due to the state required January 1st increase to minimum wage. As I've reported in the past, this will have a significant impact on the cost to operate our golf course, seasonal laborers, Allen Harbor, Recreation Programs, and our Summer Camp. This will be detailed and evident during our upcoming budget process.

## Projects/Initiatives

### Finance Department Recipient of 2 Additional National GFOA Awards



- *Congratulations to the Finance Department and those staff members assisting it, including Kate Glass in my office, in receiving two additional national awards from the Government Finance Officers Association for thorough and easy-to-read reporting.*
  - We received news in December 2024 of our **Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting Award for FY2023** and the **Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the FY2025 Budget**.
  - These awards signify our commitment to the best practices of municipal financial management and our budget transparency for our community.

### No Parking NKPD Request Granted



- The State has approved the North Kingstown Police Department's request to restrict parking on both sides of **Boston Neck Road from Beach Street to Fairway Drive**.
- They plan to install signage shortly.

- Congratulations to our Finance Department and those staff members assisting our Finance Department, including Kate Glass of my office, on receiving two national awards from the Government Finance Officers Association. They received the Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting for FY2023 and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the FY2025 Budget. Both of these awards were announced this past December by GFOA. These awards signify our commitment to the best practices of municipal financial management and budget transparency for our community.
- The State has approved the North Kingstown's Police Department's request to restrict parking on both sides of Boston Neck Road from Beach Street to Fairway Drive. They will, hopefully, be installing signage shortly.

## Projects/Initiatives

### Climate Resilience Report Coming Soon



- A group of residents attended the last Council meeting in December and requested an update on the Town's actions to address **climate threats facing our community** along with actions within our Comprehensive Plan.
- While I provided a list of climate resiliency accomplishments during a Manager's Report a few months ago, the Planning Department is working on a comprehensive update and report.
  - I expect to present it to you, and the public, during the Council Meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Planning Department Post Road Winter Wonderland Seasonal Decorating Contest



- The Planning Department experienced 70 businesses participating in the **2024 Post Road Winter Wonderland seasonal decorating competition** developed with goals to increase curb appeal of the heavily trafficked mixed residential and commercial corridor while encouraging interaction and friendly competition amongst Post Road businesses and business owners.
- The winners of this year's competition, as first announced at the Recreation Department's New Year's Day Plunge at the Town Beach, are:
  - Best Traditional Decorations: Mae's Place
  - Best Modern Decorations: Pagoda Inn
  - Best New Participant: The Lock Shop
  - Most Festive Plaza: North Kingstown Laundry Plaza (NK Laundry, Total Look Salon, Renew Island Spa and Rhody Slice)

- A group of residents attended our past meeting in December and requested an update on the town's actions to address climate threats facing our community along with our actions within our Comprehensive Plan. While I provided a list of climate resilience accomplishments during a Manager's Report a few months ago, the Planning Department is working on a comprehensive update and report and I expect it to be presented to you, and the public, during your March Council Meeting.
- The Planning Department concluded a very successful Post Road Winter Wonderland Decorating Program. This program successfully increased curb appeal of this heavily traveled roadway and encouraged interaction among the Post Road businesses and property owners. Congratulations to Mae's Place, Pagoda Inn, The Lock Shop, and the North Kingstown Laundry Plaza as winners of this year's competition. And my thanks to all businesses for participating as well as the Planning Department on their successful work with this initiative.

## Projects/Initiatives

### Senior Tax Freeze Analysis Analysis in Progress



- At the last Council Meeting, Councilperson Beth Hill Ross asked if we could put together a **financial impact of a potential senior tax freeze**. This is something we are working on; it will take some time. I hope to have a detailed analysis for our upcoming budget sessions.
- Until then, we've run some preliminary numbers using just the 2025 assessed values for the 2,300 or so residents currently receiving our senior income or flat exemptions; the total value would be \$1,459,409.80.
  - **Based on our current tax rate and a 2% growth in the tax rate, that would be an annual loss of \$432,000 in tax revenue with compounded growth each year.**
- This significant loss in revenue would have to be covered by those not receiving the tax freeze and ineligible for tax exemptions that seniors receive – families who are having more and more difficulties in affording home ownership due to the rising cost of real estate.
  - *Also note: if the rate gets lowered as a result of the statistical revaluation, which is anticipated, the loss in tax revenue would be even greater.*
  - *On behalf of the residents and families trying to make ends meet in difficult times, I would be very hesitant to implement a senior tax freeze, asking them to bear an additional tax burden. Seniors currently – and rightfully so – receive a generous exemption as it stands.*

- At your last Council Meeting, Council Person Beth Hill Ross asked for the financial impact of a potential senior tax freeze. This is something we are working on and will take some time. I hope to have a detailed analysis during our upcoming budget sessions. However, until then, I'd like to present some preliminary numbers and commentary. If we just use the 2025 assessed value for the 2,300 or so residents currently receiving our senior income or flat exemptions, the total value would be \$1,459,409,800. Based on our current tax rate and based on a 2% growth in the tax rate, that would be an annual loss of \$432,000 in tax revenue, with compounded growth each following year.



- And this may be a conservative figure as it is based on those seniors currently receiving exemptions and not all senior property owners.

This \$432,000 loss would have to be covered by those not receiving the tax freeze, families who are having more and more difficulty in affording home ownership due to the rising cost of real estate, families who currently don't receive the exemptions our seniors already do. Also note, if the rate gets lowered as a result of the statistical revaluation, which is likely, the loss in tax revenue would be even higher.

Again, these are very rough #'s and I will have more information during our upcoming budget session. However, due to the effect on families who are trying to make ends meet during these difficult times, I would be very hesitant to implement a senior tax freeze as seniors currently – and rightfully so – receive very generous exemptions as it stands now.

## Projects/Initiatives

### Municipal Parking Lot Brown St. (Wickford) Project Update



- The QR Code posted in the Municipal Parking Lot on Brown Street in Wickford has been repaired. I am hoping to add additional signage as well.
- For an update on the project: the concrete footing has been completed; the team is now working to construct the retaining wall. This must be completed before sidewalk improvements, drainage and surface parking lot improvements can begin.
  - As the wall was deemed historic by the Historic Preservation Commission, the new wall will be required to use existing stones. Any new stones will have to be identical in design and color. The wall is expected to be complete by the end of February.
  - When the wall is finished, the sheeting will be removed – in time for the spring season in Wickford Village.

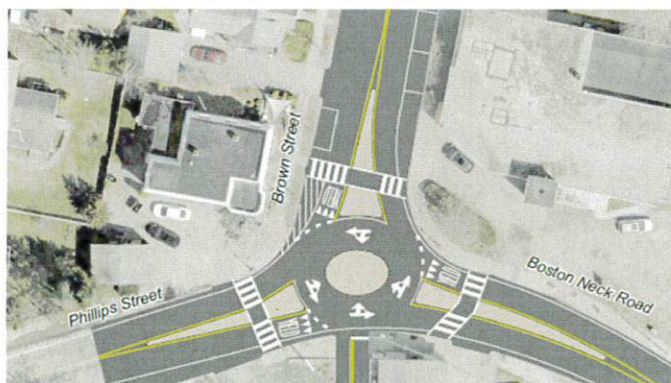
- And finally, an update on the Municipal Parking Lot Project. First, the QR informational code is repaired and up and running. I am hoping to add signage as well.

As to the project itself, the concrete footing has been completed, and the project team is now working on the construction of the retaining wall. The wall must be completed before they begin the sidewalk improvements, drainage and surface parking lot improvements. In addition, due to the wall being deemed historic by the Historical Preservation Commission, the new wall will be required to use existing stones with any new stones being identical in design and color. The wall is expected to be complete by the end of February where sheeting will be removed, in time for the spring season in Wickford Village.

## Wickford Mini-Roundabout

### Update

- I look forward to providing historical and current data regarding the Mini-Roundabout and clarifying some misinformation.
- I want to thank the Town Council for providing an additional opportunity for anyone to speak on this topic under Public Comment at today's meeting.
  - This solution was first fully vetted at public meetings back in 2020 and 2021, where residents, business owners, public safety personnel and RI DOT representatives unanimously supported this proposal as the safest solution to this challenging intersection.



I'll continue my Manager's Report by taking this opportunity to provide a brief history on the mini roundabout in Wickford Village. Following this, the Town Council has provided an opportunity for anyone wishing to speak on this item under Public Comment. I thank the Council for this opportunity as there has been substantial misinformation floated on social media, misinformation I hope to clarify over the next few minutes.

This power point will be on our website tomorrow morning. Let me begin by saying, whether you are in favor of the roundabout, opposed to the roundabout, or mixed on the suggestion, this solution was fully vetted in public meetings back in 2020 and 2021 where the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, residents of Wickford, business owners within Wickford, and public safety personnel fully vetted and unanimously supported the mini roundabout as the safest and most aesthetic proposal to address this challenging intersection.

## Wickford Mini-Roundabout

### History

- September 28, 2020, Town Council Meeting:

First Public Discussion of the Phillips/Brown/Boston Neck Rd. Intersection.

- RI DOT confirmed this was a very unique, somewhat dangerous, and unconventional intersection.
- Substantial public comment followed, confirming concerns about the intersection with emphasis on both vehicular and passenger safety.
- Public safety personnel from both Police and Fire commands emphasized that a 3-way stop sign and traffic signal would result in major back-ups in Wickford Village; neither would be advantageous.

- November 16, 2020, RI DOT follow-up:

The U.S. Federal Highway Administration will not permit the use of pedestrian control or flashing beacons for a stop or yield.

Based on input from public safety, residents, and businesses, two options were recommended: Islands to be installed at each of the roads leading to the intersection, or a mini-roundabout sized appropriately for trucks and fire apparatus and would "be an aesthetic gateway for the village of Wickford."

The first public discussion took place during a September 28, 2020 Town Council Meeting. It was there that RIDOT confirmed this was a very unique, somewhat dangerous and unconventional intersection. They mentioned that it was one of only two intersections in all of Rhode Island where the traffic coming into the T intersection has the right of way.

They conducted a study which mentioned a stop control, a three-way stop sign, and a mini roundabout. This was followed by substantial public comment confirming concerns about this intersection with emphasis on both vehicular safety and pedestrian safety. It was during this discussion that leadership within both our police and fire departments emphasized that a three-way stop sign or traffic signal would not be advantageous and would result in major back-ups in Wickford.

RIDOT then followed up on November 16, 2020 stating that the Federal Highway Administration will not permit the use of pedestrian control, flashing beacons for a stop or yield. They then, based on the input from public safety, residents, and businesses offered two recommendations. One was for islands to be installed at each of the roads leading to the intersection and the second being a mini roundabout which would be small enough to be mountable for trucks and fire apparatus and would, in their words, be an aesthetic gateway for the village of Wickford.

I also want to mention here where I've read on social media that roundabouts would defer from the historic character. While I'm not going to declare myself as an expert on historic architecture, I can say that roundabouts are spread out all over Europe, and it was felt that this proposal would positively function as an aesthetic gateway into Wickford.



## Wickford Mini-Roundabout

### History

- January 5, 2021

Subsequent meeting with State Traffic Commission, Chief Flanagan of NKPD, Chief Kettelle of NKFD, Planning Director Nicole Fontaine with myself and our Council President

Consensus from everyone in attendance was that the most beneficial option to improve safety at this intersection would be the mini-roundabout.

- The mini-roundabout should not exceed 2-3" and should not have landscaping.
- It will address pedestrian safety and would have a positive impact on traffic flow.
- Universal consensus was that additional stop signs would be detrimental with the creation of public safety difficulties and increase traffic delays particularly on residential side streets.

- January 13, 2021

Unanimous endorsement of the mini-roundabout option received from the Wickford Advisory Committee.

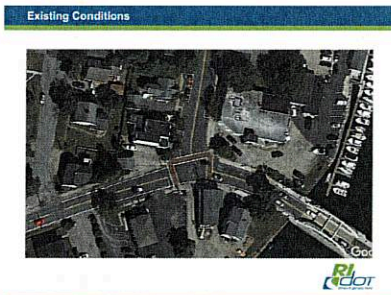
The next step was a meeting with RIDOT, the State Traffic Commission, Chief Flanagan of the North Kingstown Police Department, Chief Kettelle of the North Kingstown Fire Department, Planning Director Nicole LaFontaine, our Council President, and me on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The consensus at this meeting was that the most beneficial option to address this intersection would be in the mini roundabout. The roundabout should not exceed 2-3 inches and should not have landscaping. It will address pedestrian safety and would have a positive effect on traffic and/or traffic back-up. There was universal consensus that additional stop signs would be detrimental, would create public safety difficulties and would increase traffic, particularly on the residential side streets.

This was followed by a letter from the Wickford Advisory Committee on January 13<sup>th</sup> unanimously endorsing the roundabout proposal.

## Wickford Mini-Roundabout

### History

- January 25, 2021 (continued)



RI DOT took the opportunity to confirm that any additional stop or signal controls would add to the back-up in this area and would adversely affect the residential streets within Wickford.

The next step in this very public process was the Town Council's January 25, 2021 meeting where RIDOT made a public presentation.

## Wickford Mini-Roundabout

### History

• January 25, 2021 (continued)

#### Existing Conditions



RI DOT took the opportunity to confirm that any additional stop or signal controls would add to the back-up in this area and would adversely affect the residential streets within Wickford.



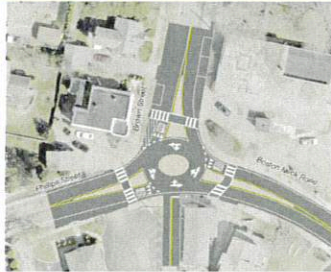
RIDOT took this opportunity to confirm that any additional stop or signal controls would add to the backup in this area and would adversely affect the residential streets within Wickford.

## Wickford Mini-Roundabout

### History

• January 25, 2021 (continued)

#### Proposed Improvement



RI DOT proceeded to explain that based on the discussions, public safety, and traffic concerns, as well as the wishes of businesses and residents in the area, they felt a mini-roundabout that would fit into the right-of-way and would be traversable by large and emergency vehicles, would be the recommended option.

RI DOT stated that there are numerous benefits to this option, including that:

- each direction has similar control and the same yield control
- pedestrian crossing is much shorter by creating a 20' crossing area
- it would positive affect on slowing the speed of vehicles
- and it would have a positively contributed to the aesthetics of the village of Wickford.

Numerous residents and business owners then commented that they were in favor of the mini-roundabout option and thanked RI DOT and the Town Council for their attention to this matter.

They then proceeded to explain that based on all of the discussions, public safety and traffic concerns, and the wishes of the businesses and residents in this area, they felt the mini roundabout, a smaller than conventional roundabout would fit into the right of way, is traversable by large and emergency vehicles, and would be the recommended option.

They stated that there are numerous benefits to this option, including the fact that each direction has similar control and the same yield control, pedestrian crossing is much shorter by creating a 20' crossing area, it would have a positive effect on slowing the speed of vehicles, and would have a positive aesthetic effect on the village of Wickford.

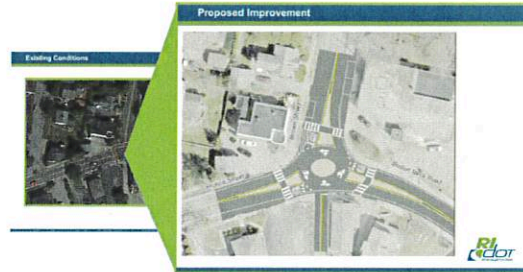
Numerous residents and business owners then commented that they are in favor of this option and thanked RIDOT and the Town Council for their attention to this matter.

## Wickford Mini-Roundabout

### History

- January 25, 2021 (continued)

A bi-partisan Town Council unanimously voted to send a resolution endorsing the Mini-Roundabout as proposed by RI DOT.



The Town Council, a bi partisan Town Council I should add, unanimously voted to send a resolution endorsing the mini roundabout as proposed by RIDOT.

## Wickford Mini-Roundabout

### History

- Since January 25, 2021
- RI DOT has put forth a significant amount of resources including \$209,000 in taxpayer dollars for the designing, engineering, consulting and schematic design for the construction bid planned for this spring.
  - Initial drawings call for a mini-roundabout within the existing paved area. No widening is expected to be required.
  - Large vehicles will be able to drive over the traversable center and splitter islands via a sloped granite 3" curb.
  - Splitter islands are proposed to be stamped and colored concrete.
  - The sidewalks will match existing proposed materials.
  - No additional lighting will be required.

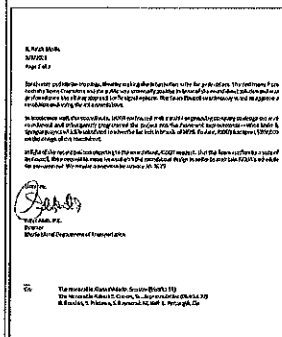
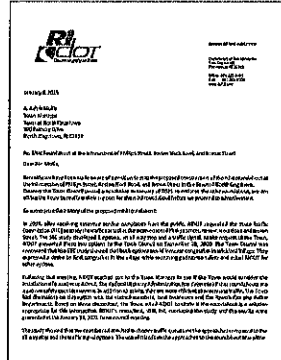
Since that time, the RI Department of Transportation has invested a significant amount of resources and \$209,000 in Rhode Island taxpayer dollars, as they've prepared designing, engineering, consulting and schematic design in preparation for a bid this spring. The initial drawings call for a mini roundabout within the existing paved area. No widening is expected to be required. Large vehicles will be able to drive over the traversable center and splitter islands via a sloped granite 3-inch curb. The splitter islands are proposed to be stamped and colored concrete. The sidewalks will match the existing exposed material. No additional lighting will be required.

## Wickford Mini-Roundabout

### History

• January 8, 2025

• Letter received from RI DOT Director Alviti



- All previous options proposed could potentially increase congestion in Wickford Village, and a mini-roundabout is highly recommended.
- US Federal Highway Administration has determined that roundabouts are a proven safety countermeasure and are efficient in processing traffic.
- A RI DOT consultant provided a study that showed the mini-roundabout solution would result in shortened traffic queues on approaches and would allow for shorter pedestrian crossings, ultimately making it safer for pedestrians.
- Director Alviti asks for confirmation from the Town to move forward with the current plan.

This is a letter I received from RIDOT Director Peter Alviti last week. In this letter, he makes mention that all of the options, with the exception of the mini roundabout, could potentially increase congestion in Wickford village and recommended the mini roundabout. In his letter, he mentions that the Federal Highway Administration has determined that roundabouts are a proven safety countermeasure and are efficient in processing traffic. Their consultant provided a study that showed this roundabout would result in shorter traffic queues on approaches and would allow for shorter pedestrian crossings, making it safer for pedestrians. In his letter, he asks for town confirmation of moving forward with the roundabout.

## Wickford Mini-Roundabout

### From the Town Manager

• January 13, 2025 (today)

- This solution has been fully vetted, receiving outstanding public input and has resulted in a solution that is supported by traffic engineers, public safety personnel, residents, and business owners.
- State funds are very competitive.
  - While I can't speak for RI DOT, for the Town of North Kingstown to change its opinion after going through an exhaustive near-five year process to get to where we are today and over \$200,000 in state funds being spent on a unanimously supported solution to address vehicular and pedestrian safety in our community can jeopardize our future requests for state dollars as we look for their help resolving the existing Route 4 conditions and the many other projects we need their collaboration to accomplish.
- After public comment, unless directed otherwise by Town Council, I will respond to Director Alviti's letter that this discussion has taken place and that no additional action is being taken to ask RI DOT to consider our plans for the improvement of the Brown/Phillips/Boston Neck Rd intersection.

As Town Manager, let me say that whether I'm in favor or opposed to this roundabout, this approach has been fully vetted, received outstanding public input, and has resulted in a solution that is supported by traffic engineers, public safety personnel, residents, and business owners.

In addition, state money is very competitive, state money which we've been very successful in obtaining to address our needs here in North Kingstown. And, while I can't speak for RIDOT, for us to change our mind 5 years later, after going through this process and having the state spend over \$200,000 of taxpayer dollars towards what was a unanimously supported solution, has to have some effect on our future requests for state dollars as we look to resolve the Route 4 situation and many other projects we are looking for state approval of.

I look forward to hearing public comment. I hope this information has been of some assistance.



After public comment, unless directed otherwise by the Council, I will respond to Director Alviti's January 8<sup>th</sup> letter to me advising him that we've had this discussion and there has been no action taken to ask RIDOT to reconsider this approach.



## Thank You

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January 13, 2025

A. Ralph Mollis, Town Manager

The Council thanked Mr. Mollis for his extensive presentation. President Mancini stated that the Council will take Public Comment next.

The Council took Item Number 7 next.

### 7. Public Comment

George Brennan, 70 Boone Street, read the following submitted statement:

"I would like to comment on the Wickford roundabout. I am not an engineer or traffic expert. I have been involved with discussions concerning the roundabout since 2020. I have observed the progress of the project since then. I have seen most of the suggestions for options and seen most of the questions and answers.

As a member of a town committee that initially supported a 3-way stop, we learned of opposition to the 3-way stop by the Public Safety experts, the Police Chief and Fire Chief. Traffic would back up and delay response time to areas south and north of the village. We as a group unanimously deferred to the experts of our town and reconsidered.

The proposal was developed by the state to construct a mini roundabout with the same directives for all approaches so traffic flows continually from all directions. Auto speed will also be reduced.

This seemed reasonable. The Committee, after much discussion, voted to send a recommendation to the Town Council in support of the mini roundabout. I continue to hold the opinion that the mini roundabout is a reasonable solution to a bad intersection.

At the mention of the idea in conversations, the immediate reaction was WHAT? They immediately think of the rotaries in Apponaug and say they are awful. This is not what the proposal is. It's more like a dot in the street.

People ask what buildings in town will have to be knocked down? No buildings will be knocked down.

Pedestrians will get killed at that rotary. In fact, the rotary will be safer by A: moving the crosswalks further away from the intersection, B: create breaks or safe spaces to stop halfway across, and C: traffic will be slowed.

With all the rotary walls, the landscaping and trees, no boat haulers or big vehicles can get through. The mini rotary will not have any of that. So how are trucks going to get through such a small rotary? It's impossible. Not true, the small mini roundabout is only 4 inches high, rounded and the trucks will be able to ride right over it.

The construction will kill all retail businesses that are consistently under pressure. Yes, there admittedly will be some disruption. However, A: work will not be scheduled around summer and holiday shopping and B: work is scheduled to be mostly done at night.

By my rough calculation, since the end of 2020 about one hundred and four Town Council meetings have occurred. Every meeting has had public comment. I do not know of any person approaching the podium to express concern about the mini roundabout project.

Discussion is good. Participation is good. Passion is good. Reasonable ideas, discussion, collaboration and participation are expected. Information and knowledge are a powerful thing!

He believes a rotary will make pedestrians safer and reduce speed of traffic flow.

Randy Wietman, 40 Sanford Avenue, stated that he is speaking on behalf of himself and not any other organization. When this started in the fall of 2020, he would never have believed we would be here rehashing this. He feels the rotary is the best of better solutions. He is concerned about how our community would look if we went back to RIDOT and changed our mind. He respects different options. There was a process in 2020 and 2021 where the public had an opportunity to provide their input. Now the DOT is ready to deliver, and the issue is still being discussed.

Joseph Teixeira, 200 Delano Drive, stated that he would like to change the subject matter back to our 2,200 seniors. He thanked Councilor Hill Ross for requesting that Mr. Mollis review the impact of freezing the property tax rate for property owners 65 or older who have lived in the town for 15 years or longer. He would like to make a proposal to the Town Council for a tax credit. He has concerns with school taxes and the affordability for seniors to pay increasing town tax rates while not having any children in the education system for many years. He submitted a letter as a record of this meeting.

Kim Greenberg, 44 Phillips Street, stated that she lives and works on the corner where the proposed roundabout is going to be. She has seen and heard the commotion daily. She has seen near countless accidents at this intersection. She is not sure if the rotary is the solution, but something needs to change at this corner. She says we cannot wait for someone to be injured first. In the meantime, she believes preventive actions should be taken until the beginning of this rotary project.

Katie Anderson, 66 Peaceful Lane, stated that she has questions for Beth Hill Ross regarding her Change.org Petition. She will email them following this meeting in the hope of a response. Ms. Anderson read the following statement:

1. "You claim the roundabout is not necessary. Please provide information to substantiate this. What studies are you citing? If you spoke with experts, what are their credentials, and what is their awareness of this specific intersection, and proposals made thus far?"
2. You claim the roundabout is not historic. Presumably, you're suggesting that stop signs and stoplights are historic. Please advise as to which historians support this opinion.
3. You claim logistical problems for trucks and school buses, noting they'll be "driving all over it." Please cite expert testimony or published studies relative to this roundabout to support your claim. To-date, the only expert on the record – DOT – has not supported this.
4. You say this roundabout will cause "considerably greater danger" to pedestrians. Can you explain how you arrived at this conclusion? What statistics or research informs your claim?
5. Is the Wickford Merchants Association on the record stating this will hurt their bottom line, as you claim?

6. You allege on social media, using hashtags, emojis, and vague allusions that Mr. Mancini is corrupt. Never once have you substantiated these claims with evidence, nor has the Ethics Commission or any other body made this charge. Your petition implies that President Mancini and Town Manager Mollis met clandestinely with DOT. In reality – and this is a matter of public record – Mr. Mancini noted in open session this meeting would occur because the then-police and fire chiefs publicly testified that they opposed the three way stop sign. Are you suggesting a town manager and town council president cannot meet with a state agency? Or are you suggesting that the police and fire chiefs were in league with whatever conspiracy you feel is occurring? If so, again, what factual evidence supports this? (And please note that for all of my questions, I'm not looking for the "connect the dots" kinds of exercises you engage in on social media, but actual substantiated evidence.)
7. You say those opposed to the roundabout "seem to be the majority." How did you arrive at this conclusion? Other than discussion on the echo chamber of your carefully censored social media page, what sort of scientifically-validated polling did you employ?
8. You end your petition with reference to how people may donate to your campaign. Why? Is this a legitimate exercise, or an extended campaign and fundraising activity?
9. She says she looks forward to a detailed, well-researched and factual response particularly in light of what the Town Manager shared tonight.

Joyce Pastore, 174 Earle Drive, is opposed to the rotary and wants to be on record of saying so. She says that many people are rejecting the rotary including many of the businesses which have changed since 2021.

Tom Briody, 93 Crest Field Lane, is here to support the mini roundabout. A mini roundabout is ascetically and historically pleasing and will increase public safety. He believes it is a public safety issue and petty politics have gotten in the way. He is concerned about Facebook accusations and a petition being used by a council member to raise money. He says it's too bad we don't have decent media to cover this town. He quotes a Texas reporter "Listen to the people who are trying to talk about how to fix what's wrong not the ones who just work people into a snip over the problems. Listen to the people with ideas about how to fix things not the ones who just blame others." Please keep these words in mind when you look for information.

Gil Bianchi, 215 Rollingwood Drive, has 2 quick points to address. One is the look of a roundabout in Wickford Village and two is the reliance on expert testimony and expert opinions. First, he took his family to England on the English countryside, and they all operate with roundabouts, and they do it in a very safe manner. They also look nice in a historical village. Secondly, most importantly is, the only expert option on this subject has been DOT.

Mary Worobec, 25 North Road, read the following statement:

"I would like to thank our Town Council, including past and present members, for the effort they have committed to the Wickford intersection issue. They have examined, studied, debated with experts and publicly presented findings. Both fire and police officers have weighed in, stating the proposed mini roundabout plan is superior to the 3-way stop or traffic light option. We have heard Ralph speak on the previous concerns with the intersection.

Through studies and publicly recorded presentations, we have learned that a mini roundabout in this problematic location will:

1. Reduce speed due to the size and shape of the structure.
2. Better maintain flow and reduce back-ups.
3. Reduce confusion of drivers and pedestrians due to greater uniformity in response from all vantage points.
4. Allow fire and police vehicles to navigate the intersection with greater ease and safety than alternative proposals AND
5. Better address pedestrian concerns through more strategically designed, shorter and safer crosswalks with small islands in the middle.

In short, this multi-level approach by our past and present officials to thoroughly examine the problem has bettered our understanding of all options and resulted in a solution of a mini roundabout that best fits the needs of our town's drivers, pedestrians, residents, and businesses.

Let's proceed with this well vetted mini roundabout plan which our officials had previously officially and unanimously approved and which RIDOT is prepared to proceed with.

Jack Kliever, 25 Mary Street, Newport, is a former North Kingstown resident and he has a business in North Kingstown. He is a member of the Wickford Village Association (WVA), and he was the Vice President at the time when this roundabout was being debated. The WVA started discussing this proposal in 2020. He said we voted to endorse the mini roundabout proposal in 2021. Every business in Wickford was aware of this proposal and agreed the roundabout was the best solution. He was also a member of the Wickford Advisory Committee and remembers this being brought up there as well.

President Mancini asked if that endorsement has been withdrawn. Mr. Kliever responded not as far as he knows.

Richard Sellers, 17 Johnson Avenue, stated that he has lived in Europe and dealt with mini roundabouts and has had no problems with them. They keep traffic moving and cars from sitting idle. He thanked the Town Council and asked them to stay the course and get it done. He is concerned about the solar projects but is in favor of the economic impact from them. He believes they could generate additional revenues for the Town.

Giona DiZoglio, 4 Brown Street, stated that she wishes someone from RIDOT was present, but she is happy that the focus is on safety. She manages a property on the corner of Brown Street and Phillips Street. She has spoken with some businesses that are startups and is concerned about the impact of 8 weeks of construction on their businesses. She would like an update on road work, roadwork hours, as well as the impact on sidewalks.

Richard Welch, 8 Arrow Lane, stated that he is pleased with the number of people attending the meeting but wishes the state representatives had stayed to listen. As for the experts at RIDOT, he listed several continuing problems. He would also like an update on the standing of the Wickford Elementary School.

Ralph Mollis says we are having a meeting with them on Friday. They are currently having some hurdles and challenges with CRMC with historical tax credits. We will sit with them on Friday to see how we can help and will be sure to have a detailed analysis at the January 27th Town Council meeting in the Manager's Report.

In answer to Mr. Welch's question regarding the status of 55 Brown Street, Mr. Mollis replied 55 Brown Street has already been addressed at past council meetings. He will be meeting with who he believes is the new owner on Wednesday.

Mr. Welch further stated that he believes seniors need a tax break. A large amount of tax revenue goes to education. He hasn't had a child in school in over 20 years. He believes giving seniors a tax break would make it easier for them to stay in town rather than having to move away. He believes seniors are struggling to pay their bills.

Maurice Cusick, 48 Fieldstone Lane, stated that he is a lawyer who grew up in East Greenwich. He stated that the Town must go with the safest option because if there is an accident involving a driver with limited insurance, the Town will be blamed. He believes the Town will be at stake for not using the safest option provided by DOT. Mr. Cusick stated that he is a litigator and repeats that the Town must go with the safest option.

Rickey Thompson, 194 Plain Road, stated that in 2020 Town Council Member Richard Welch was asking what was going on with this intersection but was given no answers. He later heard on the radio that a study was being conducted at this intersection.



Mr. Mollis stated that he wanted to clarify some information about the intersection and the meeting with local department heads and the state. He stated that at this meeting it was clarified that the 3-way stop sign would have detrimental issues to traffic flow. During this meeting, a consensus was made and from there they brought that information to a public Town Council meeting to present the results.

Mr. Thompson stated that again Mr. Welch asked what was going on with that intersection and no one responded. He further stated that he missed the Town Council Meeting where this was discussed. He has seen on social media over the last 5 years that there have been 4 accidents at this intersection, which would equal 1 every 456 days. He is concerned about pedestrian safety and the elderly navigating the roundabout. Mr. Thompson also submitted a statement.

Sarilee Norton, 58 West Cove Drive, stated that she is in favor of the roundabout and has been open about it. The roundabout issue has been percolating for five years. This is not something new. She agrees with the people who say that Route 4 is a higher priority but believes this is not an either/or. The funds are not transferable between projects. She stated that we can debate, delay, and defer, but we'll end up with nothing. She also referred to Wickford Elementary and 55 Brown Street. She references the AI definition of slow walking regarding these projects. She also submitted a statement.

Meg Kerr, 151 Prospect Avenue, stated that she is looking forward to answers regarding the Comp Plan. She feels there is not enough public education and information available for the community about projects like the roundabout. She is in favor but thinks there should be some kind of signage at the intersection about the future roundabout project. She feels like Covid distracted people from being aware of what was going on with local meetings and projects. She appreciates that there are now signs and information about what is going on in the Brown Street parking lot, but she feels that information should have been posted sooner.

President Mancini stated that the Town Council Meetings had their highest attendance during Covid. Ms. Kerr stated that she feels Covid made people forget, also that it was 5 years ago.

Bob Vanderslice, 151 Prospect Avenue, thanked Mr. Mollis and the Town Council for the report and progress on the Comp Plan. He supports the rotary. He shared the severe communication challenges he had as a public health official. At various times he had to send out notices and certifications to the public, but as soon as the work began on a project no one would remember any of the notices or certified mail. He stated that he remembers the council meetings about the intersection, and the safety officials did convince him that the roundabout would be the safest solution. He believes signage might be the way to keep people better informed.

Noeline Thomson, 5 Sea Grass Way, stated that she supports the roundabout as she has used them not only in the US but in Europe as well. She further stated that it has taken 4 plus years to get us to this point and the last thing we would want to do is pull the rug out from under the DOT. She is concerned about social media raising an opposition to slow down items that have already taken years to get to a point of action.

Frank Sullivan, 43 Firwood Drive, stated that he lives in a middle-class area in Davisville that is soon to be the home of thousands of solar panels. He referenced an article from Eco Rhode Island that he would like to file for the record. Mr. Sullivan further stated that he would like to compare the 5-year discussion about the roundabout with the 5 months it took the Town to impose 10,000 solar panels around a nice quiet neighborhood. The residents only had the opportunity to speak at one meeting on this solar project where over the course of three hours people in opposition of this project spoke against the project and not one person spoke in favor of the project. He further stated that we have hired a lawyer, raised money, and will not stand up for this.

Diane Hill, 40 Heritage Road, stated that if experts and data have agreed that a mini roundabout is the best solution then she supports it and looks forward to making this improvement to our community.

Lisa Andrews, 50 North Road, stated that she is proud to be here to support a mini roundabout solution. She believes it is not perfect, but it is a safety improvement. Whether you heard about this project 5 years ago or this year the safety issues are still the same. It is too dangerous to be left as it is. She strongly suggests proceeding with the project.

Rob Phillips, 90 Fletcher Road, stated he has lived all over the world and now his family has put their roots down in North Kingstown. He supports the roundabout in Wickford, and he is concerned about misinformation misleading the community. He would like the Town Council to implement mandatory ethics training for its members.

Michael Donohue, 141 West Main Street, thanked Mr. Mollis and the Town Council for working with RIDOT on this project. However, he is concerned about taking a left at this intersection coming from Brown Street. He is totally in support of this roundabout and hopes it will be pushed forward.

Karen Salvatore, 621 Gilbert Stuart Road, founder and former executive of DOT Watch stated that she has 2 words about this roundabout "Show me". She would like to see a video of a full-scale roundabout. She will not take the Council's word for it; she wants to see it.

John Brito, 83 Brown Street, owner of Wickford on the Water stated that he is speaking as a business owner on Brown Street. Pedestrian safety is the biggest concern for him. He further stated that the safety issues are not just at the roundabout, but all along Brown Street as you have people trying to parallel park while traffic is building up and that causes a problem. The parking lot being repaired has been the biggest issue for his business because of location, but he still supports it as well as the roundabout.

Larry Mandel, 54 Rome Street, stated that he salutes Mr. Mollis and the Town Council on this well thought out project. He would like to add 2 points. The first point is that when he was a diplomat, he served in London and at the end of the street where he lived there was a mini roundabout. He says that it was safe, easy to navigate and did not cause any traffic back up. The second point is the town's credibility with RIDOT. If we were to pull the rug out on this project, we would undermine that relationship and have negative consequences on future projects. He endorses Mr. Phillips' comment and believes mandatory ethics training for everyone is always a good idea.

Curt Fisher, 104 Phillips Street, stated that he believes this will be a big mistake and requested that the Town Manager, Public Works Director, and the Town Engineer be tasked with inspecting every inch of the design of this roundabout. He believes there will be people seriously injured by cars driving too fast through the roundabout and feels that a 3-way stop would be safer. Nevertheless, he says let's go with the flow. We don't want to upset the Highway Department because we need a lot of road work in this town. He wants the town to make sure it can be turned into a 3-way stop in the future.

Dave Caldwell, business address 6500 Post Road, stated that the history of this roundabout did not start in 2020. It was talked about back in 2012 when he was chairman of the Economic Development Advisory Board from 2012-2018. At that time, our relationship with DOT was not as friendly as it is now. If we say no after we say yes, that will have consequences. He believes it will work and if in three years you can prove him wrong, he will take it out at his own expense. That is how confident he is that it is going to work. He fully supports the roundabout moving forward.

Tom Wynsen, 127 Orchard Woods Drive, stated that he has been a resident of North Kingstown for 25 years and the President of the Congdon Woods Homeowners Association. He stated that he was an engineer for 30 years with various other credentials and has read an article written by Scott Davis about roundabouts and first responders. He supports this project and gives supporting information about traffic flow and roundabout safety.

Ted Rampino, 190 Mountain Laurel Way, stated that he supports the roundabout and asked if there is a social media policy for Town Council Members. President Mancini responded that there is no social media policy for the Council. There is a social media policy for any town operated accounts. Mr. Mollis further stated that the Council as individuals would not fall under the town social media policy.

President Mancini clarified that as individuals we are not subject to a town policy. Mr. Rampino asked why. Councilor McCoy stated that many Council Members as candidates have their own social media pages, and he believes all public officials must ensure that their communications on whichever variety of social media they use are responsible.

Mr. Rampino asked if that means that the survey by Councilor Hill Ross is clear, accurate and vetted?

Councilor Hill Ross stated that it was not a town council thing. It was her thing, and she did this and planned it long before she ran for council or got elected. She has continued doing it since being on the Town Council.

Mr. Rampino stated that it appears that issues on social media are not vetted or fact checked before posting. Mr. Rampino asked if this is just Councilor Hill Ross's opinion. Councilor Hill Ross stated that this is the opinion of a lot of people she has spoken with. Mr. Rampino asked Councilor Hill Ross where the statement came from saying that the roundabout is not historic or safe. Councilor Hill Ross stated that there are a lot of people who feel it is not historic and not safe, as has been stated tonight. Mr. Rampino stated that only two people have said that tonight. Councilor Hill Ross stated that there are over 750 signatures on the petition.

Mr. Rampino stated that he believes some type of ethical training needs to be done. Councilor McCoy stated that as officials, every one of us is accountable for ethical behavior. That is defined by the Rhode Island Constitution and The Rhode Island Ethics Commission. We have all taken an oath when we were sworn in.

Amy Sonder, 30 Elam Street, stated that she lives very close to this intersection and is not 100% against or 100% in favor but agrees something needs to be done. She does not think this fits into the historic area. She references the diagram with all the lines, paint, and signs. She is concerned about the esthetic look of it all. She is concerned about safety and thinks the roundabout will increase traffic flow as well as traffic speeds. She thinks an additional parking space off Brown Street needs to be removed to allow pedestrians to see oncoming traffic. She also expressed concern about two parking spaces when leaving Spink Street, which is off Elam Street. She says that tonight was educational, and it gave her more hope about the process. She is still concerned with pedestrian traffic and crossing the roundabout.

President Mancini stated that Amy Sonder's previous testimony is what stirred him to vote yes for the roundabout. Ms. Sonder thanked President Mancini and stated that with looking at the diagram, the parking spot she is concerned about is still there. She would like the pedestrian issues looked at further.

Kathleen Guarino, 139 Summit View Lane, is in favor of the roundabout. She attended all the meetings. She asked Councilor Hill Ross if she has a copy of the petition with 750 signatures on it and if those signatures were verified that they were North Kingstown residents. Councilor Hill Ross stated they are all verified by email address and that the road is a state road.

In answer to Ms. Guarino's question whether there was any way for a resident to see the actual petition, Councilor Hill Ross stated she can send her and the Council a link to view it.

Ms. Guarino stated that she believes there is no progress without disruption, and she would like Councilor Hill Ross to use her social media platform to promote locals to go out and support the local businesses that will be affected by the construction in town.

Susan Lehey, 8425 Post Road, is most concerned about pedestrian safety. She is also worried about the backed-up traffic on Brown Street affecting the safety of pedestrians crossing the Brown Street, Main Street, and West Main Street intersection. She has been a resident of town for 30 years. She has always been an avid walker. All of her friends and family are avid walkers in town as well. She fears the crosswalks will be a danger to pedestrians. She does not support the roundabout. She doesn't understand why the 3-way stop sign wasn't put up already. President Mancini explained that the 3-way stop sign was rejected by the Fire and Police Chiefs. Ms. Lehey stated that she doesn't agree with the roundabout no matter what the experts say.

Andrew Begin, 77 Tower Hill Road, represents North Kingstown millennial residents. He stated that living on Tower Hill Road with 3 children where there are no sidewalks makes him think and worry about crosswalks. He stated that he was researching the project online but was only seeing information against it. He felt opposed to the roundabout when he came to the meeting but after listening to the Town Manager, the Town Council, and local comments, his mind changed. He hopes more information will be available from the Town online. Mr. Mollis stated that a lot of information is posted on the Town's website, Facebook page, and Instagram.

Toby Sonder, 30 Elam Street, stated that he learned a lot. His view has changed a bit, and he thinks the roundabout will be a good thing. The biggest concern that he would like to address is that people are already using his street (Elam Street) as a cut-through. Recently several new families have moved to his street with small children. He is worried about drivers cutting through at high speeds. He is concerned they will use this cut-through even more when construction begins. He would like a stop sign or speed bump added to the road. He believes the road needs something to help slow down the people cutting through the area. He also has concerns about a couple of parking spaces blocking the view to Brown Street.

Michael White, 8245 Post Road, stated he has lived in North Kingstown for 30 years. He drives a large bucket truck and works in Warwick where the new roundabouts have been implemented. While driving there daily, he has seen many close calls. He believes that we need to train people on how these rotaries work. He further stated that he recently read online a man was killed a couple days ago in Warwick at a roundabout. He believes they are dangerous and is against the mini roundabout. He asked the Town Council to keep an open mind. He doesn't want to see anyone get hit because of this intersection as he believes it will be dangerous.

Rob D'Amico, 71 Lawnwood Drive, stated that he supports the roundabout and feels it will make the intersection safer. He also expressed frustration at the intersection of West Allenton Road and Route 4. He further stated that if the Council reverses their decision regarding the roundabout, it could affect future projects in North Kingstown. He asked that the Council move forward with the roundabout.

Rafael Torrado, 450 Fletcher Road, stated that he is a fairly newcomer to North Kingstown. He is an urban planner and developer who has lived in several places including Europe, the Canary Islands, and Puerto Rico where roundabouts are used in historic areas. They are efficient for small spaces and urban centers of historical towns. He says that roundabouts do need some education about usage and understanding right of way. He hopes the Council will approve the roundabout but educate the public.

Jan McAleer, 830 Ten Rod Road, stated that she drives through Keene, New Hampshire which is a pedestrian town, and they have a lot of roundabouts. She suggested that they install blinking lights at the crosswalks. President Mancini stated that we suggested that. Mr. Mollis stated that it could be those areas on local roads. This is a state highway, and FHA does not allow those types of devices. Ms. McAleer suggested that the Town investigate this further.

President Mancini thanked everyone for speaking tonight. He further stated that we have about 31 people who spoke in favor and 8 against, as well as receiving emails regarding this topic. Councilor Drew stated that the Council has received 21 emails against the roundabout and 16 in favor, some spoke tonight.

President Mancini stated that in 2021 it was unanimous to support this roundabout. Today it appears 47 people support this and 20 people are against it. He further stated that some have spoken about Councilor Hill Ross's survey which has not been submitted to the Council. He asked if she intended to submit that survey, Councilor Hill Ross stated that she will send it to the Council. Ms. Alyward suggested that Councilor Hill Ross download and print the survey and file it. Councilor Hill Ross said she tried to do that, and she will try again. President Mancini stated that it would have been helpful to have that survey today.

President Mancini suggested that he is not willing to change his perspective on the roundabout.

Councilor McCoy stated that he appreciates everyone's comments tonight. He believes that the best public policy is based on facts and not on emotion. He is on his second term, and in the past two years as the Councilor who dealt with recording all the Council correspondence, he reviewed that correspondence in preparation for tonight's meeting and he received no emails regarding the roundabout prior to this term. The election is over, and our responsibility is to govern. We have many issues in Town that are much more important than this roundabout. If you look at how much time we spent this evening on this topic, he feels that the time could have been better spent discussing issues which are more important and relevant to the Town and have greater impact on all of the citizens.



In previous meetings, Mr. Fisher approached us about speeding and the condition of Phillips Street, as well as pedestrian traffic regarding the speed of vehicles as they approach the intersection. He would like the Chief of Police to look at a potential solution to ensure that speeding isn't an issue on Phillips Street as they approach the roundabout. Councilor McCoy stated that he is in favor of the roundabout.

Councilor Hill Ross stated that she believes the reason why the Council didn't hear from anyone is because what she had been told and heard was that not everyone knew about this. Her point was to not bring this to a vote tonight but to get information out to the people, so they know that this is happening. This was discussed during Covid isolation and Bee Givan and her daughter who own Green Ink did not have the opportunity to speak on this. Councilor Hill Ross stated that her only intention is to get this information out to the people, so they know what is going on in this town.

Councilor Drew stated that she is a scientist by profession and deals with data and subject matter experts. To her knowledge the subject matter experts were the DOT Traffic Safety Officials and our Police and Fire Chiefs. We should follow their recommendations unless better data can be produced by an expert at this time. She further stated that this is how she will approach all issues, and this is how we should approach this issue.

Councilor Page stated that she appreciates everyone's comments tonight and she took notes on what everyone said, and it is important that we listen to what everyone has to say. She further stated that she thinks that we could do a better job in communicating and notifying our residents, which is one of the priorities of the Town Manager.

In answer to President Mancini's question if Mr. Mollis has the direction he needs, Mr. Mollis responded that he did.

The Council recessed the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

The Council reconvened the meeting at 9:26 p.m.

### III. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor Drew and unanimously

VOTED: To approve Consent Agenda Item Numbers 8 through 18 as presented with the exception of Agenda Item Numbers 8, 12, and 13.

#### 8. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Councilor McCoy, seconded by Councilor Hill Ross and unanimously

VOTED: To continue the approval of minutes for the Regular Meeting of December 16, 2024 to the Town Council Meeting of January 27, 2025 so the Town Clerk can add Councilor Hill Ross's comments on Item Number 16.

#### 9. Tax Abatement List #879

VOTED: To approve Tax Abatement List #879 submitted by Deb Garneau, Tax Assessor, in the amount of \$774.15; and it was

FURTHER VOTED: That overpayments, if any, resulting from these abatements are hereby approved for refund by the Tax Collector.

#### 10. Receipt of Donations

VOTED: To accept with gratitude the following donations in the amount of \$1,311.00:

For: Beechwood Senior Center  
To be used for Mealsite Programs  
From: Anonymous

\$ 25.00

For: Beechwood Senior Center To be used for Senior Programs	
From: North Kingstown Stamp Club	\$100.00
For: Holiday Giving Program	
From: First Baptist Church in Wickford	\$880.00
North Kingstown Knitters, Etc.	175.00
Wickford 7 Day Adventist Church	80.00
Anonymous	51.00

## 11. Receipt of Donation

VOTED: To accept with gratitude a donation in the amount of \$3,000.00 from the Allen R. Southwick Trust to be used for "Al's Kids" Recreation Program Scholarships.

## 12. Receipt of Donation

Motion by President Mancini, seconded by Councilor Page and unanimously

VOTED: To accept with gratitude a donation in the amount of \$30,000.00 given by the North Kingstown 350th Anniversary Steering Committee to be used to fund the following:

Legacy/Heritage Tree Program	\$ 5,000.00
Signage: Welcome to NK w/NPS A WWIIHC & PH Badges	\$10,000.00
USA 250th Anniversary Community Celebration (July 2026)	
seed funds	\$10,000.00
2nd Annual North Kingstown Family Day 2025 seed funds	\$ 5,000.00

Councilor McCoy recused himself as he is the Chair of the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee.

## 13. Award of Bid

Motion by Councilor Page, seconded by Councilor Drew and unanimously

VOTED: To award the bid for the Department of Public Works for repairs and replacement of building and utility insulation systems for the North Kingstown Golf Course Clubhouse to Red Oak Remodeling, Inc., 300 Whaley Hollow Road, Coventry, RI 02816, in the amount of \$64,297.00; and it was

FURTHER VOTED: To authorize a project contingency of 15%, or \$9,645.00, to cover unforeseen project conditions, to be controlled and approved by the Department of Public Works, for a total project authorization of \$73,942.00.

Funding for this project is from Golf Course Special Projects Account 43321020-550801.

## 14. Letter of Resignation

VOTED: To accept the letter of resignation from John Kliever, resigning from the Zoning Board of Review, and that the Town Council President send a letter of appreciation to him for the dedicated service he gave to the Town of North Kingstown; and it was

FURTHER VOTED: To appoint Joseph Donohoe, 65 Mulberry Drive, Unit 305, to a full member from First Alternate to the Zoning Board of Review to July 1, 2027, to fill the unexpired term of John Kliever; and it was

FURTHER VOTED: To appoint Richard Welch, 8 Arrow Lane, as First Alternate from Second Alternate to the Zoning Board of Review to July 1, 2027; and it was

FURTHER VOTED: To advertise the vacancy for one (1) Second Alternate to the Zoning Board of Review to July 1, 2026.

## 15. Detective License (renewal)

VOTED: To approve to December 1, 2025 the renewal application for a Detective License by Martin Hyman, 641 Congdon Hill Road, Saunderstown, subject to taxes and water paid to date, receipt of a bond, and receipt of a recommendation from the North Kingstown Police Department.

## 16. Exhibition License (1-10 vendors)

VOTED: To ratify the Town Clerk's approval of the application for an Exhibition License with 1-10 vendors by Towards an Anti-Racist North Kingstown (TANK), 72 Pine Tree Circle, to hold a public Book Festival, at the North Kingstown High School, 150 Fairway Drive, on Monday, January 13, 2025, from 5:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., subject to taxes and water paid to date; receipt of a Show Promoter's Permit; and compliance with the recommendations of the Fire Department, the Police Department, the Building Official, and the Planning Department.

## 17. Holiday Sales License (renewal)

VOTED: To approve to July 1, 2025 the renewal application for a Holiday Sales License by Tractor Supply Company, dba Tractor Supply Company #1891, 6625 Post Road, subject to taxes and water paid to date.

## 18. Refuse Collector – Commercial for Hire Licenses (9) (renewal)

VOTED: To approve to January 1, 2026 the renewal application for nine (9) Refuse Collector - Commercial for Hire Licenses by Waste Management of RI, 1610 Pontiac Avenue, Cranston, RI 02920, subject to taxes and water paid to date and inspection approval from the Transfer Station.

The Council took Item Number 20 next.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

## 20. A Resolution recognizing Major General Christopher Callahan

A motion was made by Councilor McCoy, seconded by Councilor Page and unanimously voted to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, Christopher P. Callahan graduated from Fitchburg State University and was appointed to the rank of Second Lieutenant on May 19, 1984, after participating in the Reserve Officer Training Corps program; and

WHEREAS, Callahan earned his pilot wings at Fort Rucker, Alabama, and has since been rated as a Master Army Aviator having flown over 3,500 hours in OH-6, UH-1, UH-60, and C-12 aircraft; and

WHEREAS, Callahan has served in numerous Army aviation billets with the Rhode Island Army National Guard, including:

WHEREAS, Callahan commanded the 1-126<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Aviation Battalion (CSAB) in Balad, Iraq as Task force during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) III from October 2004 to December 2005; and

WHEREAS, Callahan was appointed Adjutant General of Rhode Island by Governor Gina M. Raimondo and promoted to the rank of Brigadier General on July 31, 2015 and the rank of Major General on June 22, 2017; and

WHEREAS, Major General Callahan has attended numerous military schools, including: the Army Senior Leader Development Program – Basic, the General and Flag Officer Homeland Security Executive Seminar at Harvard University, the Army Strategic Education Program – Advanced, the National Security Studies Management Course at Syracuse University, and the United States Army War College where he received a master's degree in National Security and Strategic Studies; and

WHEREAS, General Callahan has been awarded the following military decorations and badges: Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (with 2 Silver Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Commendation Medal (with 2 Silver Oak Leaf Clusters), the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbon, and the Master Army Aviator Badge.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That I, Gregory Mancini, Town Council President of the Town of North Kingstown, do hereby recognize Major General Christopher P. Callahan, the Adjutant General of Rhode Island, for his four decades of dedicated and faithful military service to the United States and the citizens of Rhode Island and wish him much success as he retires from the military.

21. Request by Bill Pennoyer on behalf of the Veterans Day and Memorial Day Parades Committee

Motion by Councilor McCoy, seconded by Councilor Drew and unanimously

VOTED: To acknowledge the request by Bill Pennoyer on behalf of the Veterans Day and Memorial Day Parades Committee to name a portion of the property adjacent to the Municipal Parking Lot as "Anchor Park" and to schedule the naming of "Anchor Park" for a Public Hearing at the Regular Town Council Meeting of March 10, 2025.

22. Concept Discussion – Modify Dedicated Open Space via Land Swap

Attorney Dane Ardente of Darrow Everett LP, attorney for the applicant, gave the following presentation:





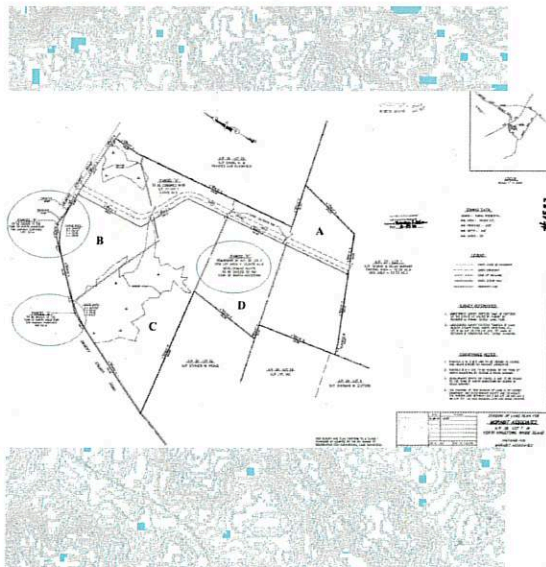
## THE PROPERTY

- The property consists of three (3) parcels recognized by the Tax Assessor.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Parcel - Plat 039, Lot 007.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Parcel - Plat 039, Lot 034.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Parcel - Plat 037, Lot 001.



## BRIEF EXPLANATION OF CENTRAL ISSUE

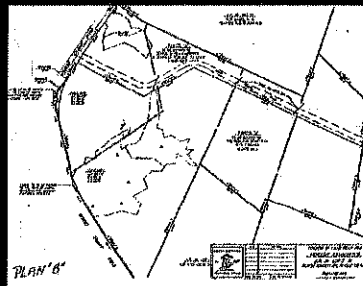
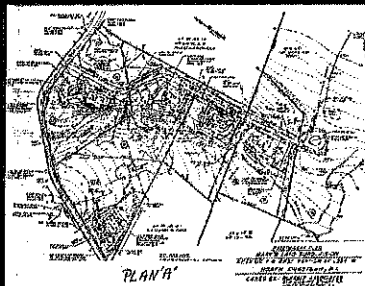
- During the late 1990's , Applicant and Town worked together for the donation of development rights for the preservation of certain portions of the property.
- Two (2) different maps were recorded which conveyed conservation easements on those particular portions to the Town.
- Both maps were recorded in error, and mistakenly conveyed portions of the property to the Town which the Applicant did not intend to be conveyed to the Town.
- The recorded maps which memorialize the dedication are recorded as Map(s) 1) 1522; and 2) 1599.



## MAP 1522 - ORIGINAL PURPOSE

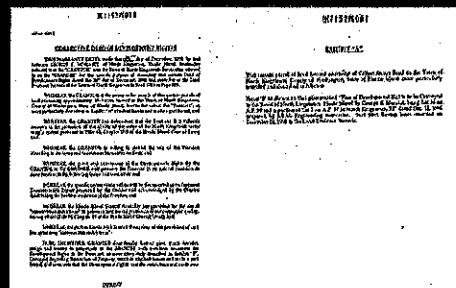
- The original purpose/outline of Lot(s) A, B, C, and D were proposed to develop a residential compound development called "Mary's Land Subdivision" in 1996.
- The original Mary's Land Subdivision Application did contemplate certain dedications to the Town.
- However, the application for Mary's Land Subdivision was withdrawn sometime after the pre-application hearing.
- Somehow, the map for Mary's Land Subdivision was erroneously recorded for dedication purposes, even though the compound development which contemplated such dedication was never pursued.

## MARY'S LAND SUBDIVISION - SITE PLANS SUBMITTED TO PLANNING COMMISSION



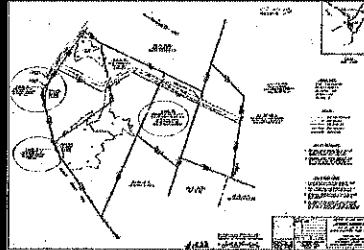
## RESULTS OF RECORDING MAP 1522

- Map 1522 was erroneously recorded nonetheless.
- However there were mistakes made in the recording of the map.
- Parcel A on Map 1522 was supposed to be retained by the Applicant, but was instead wrongfully conveyed to the Town.
- A corrective deed for Parcel A was then recorded returning Parcel A to the Applicant after being conveyed to the Town.



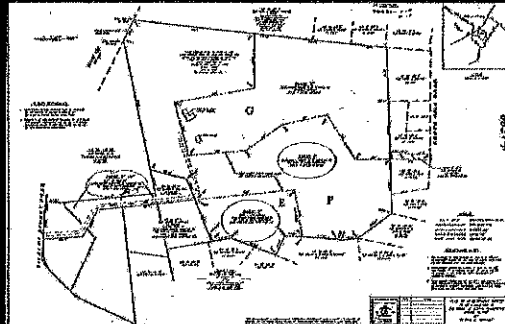
## FINAL COMMENTS ON MAP 1522

- The dedication was a condition precedent of the approval of Mary's Land Subdivision.
- The Mary's Land Subdivision Application was withdrawn prior to Preliminary Plan and never revived.
- As such, the condition precedent for dedication was never triggered, and the development rights were conveyed in error.
- Parcel(s) B and C evidence the writing "To Be Deeded To The Town of North Kingstown for Highway Purposes". However, through inquiry with the Planning Department, the original intent in the 1990's for a highway project to go through Gilbert Stuart Road never came to fruition, thus the two (2) parcels were never used for highway purposes.



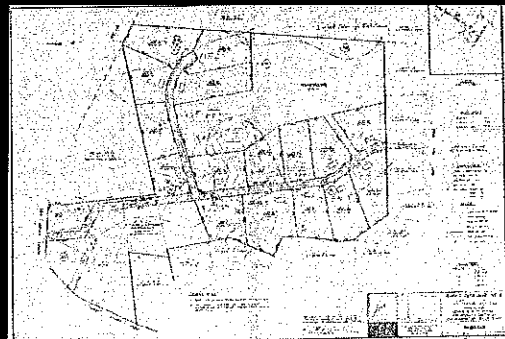
## MAP 1599 - SECOND DEDICATION MAP

- Map 1599 - Recorded December 28, 1997.
- Conveyed Development Rights to Parcel(s) E and F on Plan 1599 to the Town.
- Plan 1599 was never signed or endorsed by the Planner.



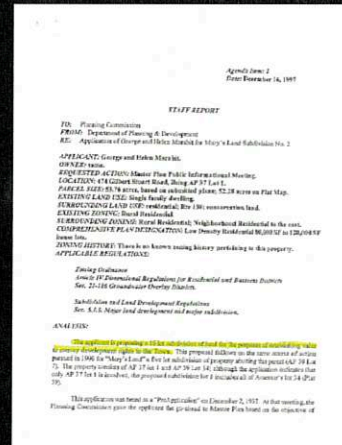
## GENESIS OF MAP 1599

- In December of 1997, the Applicant submitted a yield plan to the Planning Department which depicted a 16 lot subdivision, and was generated for the purpose of establishing a value for conveyance of development rights /tax purposes.
- Yield Plan showed all conventional lots Applicant could obtain based on total area.



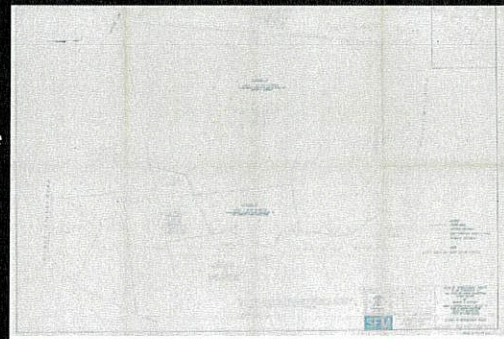
## 1997 YIELD PLAN

- The yield plan was presented to establish the value of the parcel as a whole for tax benefit purposes.
- The yield plan was not presented to the Town for dedication purposes.
- The 1997 staff report expressed “the applicant is proposing a 16 lot subdivision of land for the purposes of establishing value to convey development rights to the Town”.



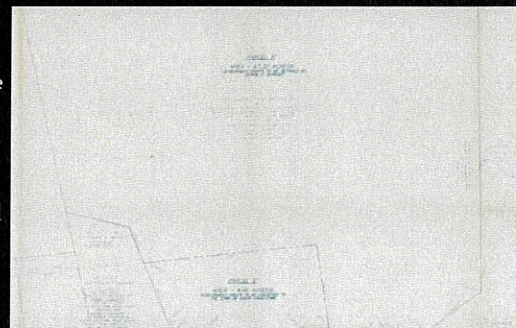
## POST-STAFF REPORT EVENTS

- After Staff Report was issued, Applicant presented the 1997 Map (shown on the right) to Town on December 29, 1997.
- The intent of the 1997 Map was to be the operative map for what the Applicant planned on dedicating, and what the Applicant planned on retaining.



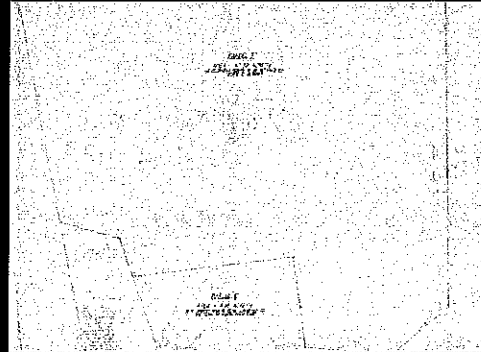
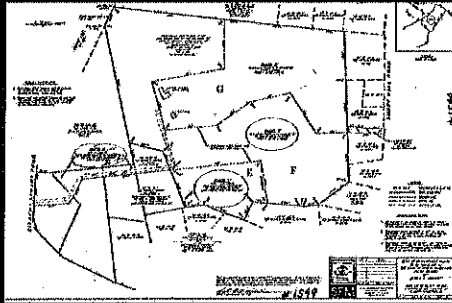
**1997 MAP - DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS TO BE  
RETAINED VS. TO BE CONVEYED**

- The 1997 Map clearly shows that Parcel E was the portion intended for conveyance of development rights to the Town.
- The 1997 Map additionally shows that Parcel F, consisting of 47.32 Acres, was for “Development Rights To Be Retained By George E. Morabit”.



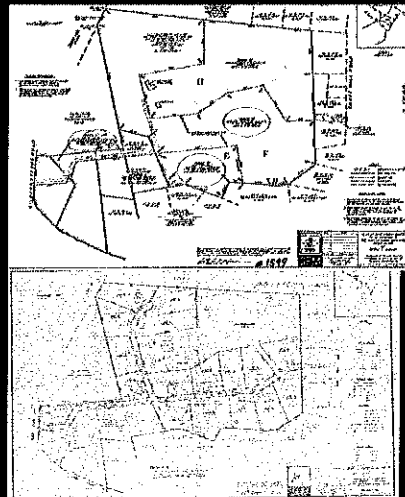


## COMPARATIVE SLIDE OF MAP 1599 (RECORDED MAP OF DEDICATION) TO THE 1997 MAP



## EXPLANATION OF MAP 1599

- Map 1599 must have been directly mirrored to the Yield Plan presented to the Town by the Applicant based on the similarities (see right side).
- The Yield Plan was never meant to be the plan which designated the Parcel(s) for dedication. Rather, the 1997 Map was intended to be the operative map for dedication purposes.
- The Applicant never intended that Parcel F be dedicated to the Town.



## TAKE AWAY

- MAP 1522
  - Dedication was only intended to occur 1) upon the approval of the Application for Mary's Land Subdivision; and 2) upon approval, for highway purposes on Parcel(s) B and C.
  - Parcel(s) B and C were supposed to be dedicated "for highway purposes" - No highway project ever ended up occurring.
  - The Application for Mary's Land Subdivision was withdrawn prior to obtaining approval.
- MAP 1599
  - Dedication was supposed to be reflective of the 1997 Map and NOT the Yield Plan.
  - Development rights for Parcel F were supposed to be retained by Applicant (per the 1997 Plan).
  - Parcel F was inadvertently dedicated to the Town.
  - Plan 1599 was never signed or endorsed by the Planner, as required to be effective.

## CURRENT STATUS / EVENTS

- The Applicant has submitted plans to the Planning Commission for the construction of four (4) residential compound development lots.
- In order to effectuate the compound development, the present dedication(s) must be revoked and re-worked based on their deficiencies.
- The Planning Department has suggested the portion of this Application involving the re-dedication be presented to the Town Council prior to the Applicant's submission of Preliminary Plan Review to obtain a determination from the Council as to its willingness to consider exchanging conserved land for other land located on the Property, which will be more refined in our request subsequent to Preliminary Plan Review.

## PROPOSED COMPOUND DEVELOPMENT PLAN



## ENCUMBRANCES COMPARED TO CURRENT APPLICATION

CURRENT ENCUMBRANCES



PROPOSED COMPOUND APPLICATION





## REQUEST OF APPLICANT

- After Preliminary Plan Review, The Applicant would require the return of development rights for certain portions of Parcel E (on Map 1599), and portions of Parcel D (on Map 1522) for the development itself from the Council.
- The current request before the Council is for the issuance of a determination of whether the Council is amicable to working with the Applicant to accomplish this once the details are further refined subsequent to Preliminary Plan Review, and after the Planning Commission has issued its conditions, comments, changes, etc.

## PROPOSED PROCESS

- Planning Department has recommended the petition to the Town Council for a determination of the viability of our request prior to submission of Preliminary Plan Application to the Planning Commission.
- Should the Council issue a determination that it is willing to work with the Applicant, the Applicant will submit for Preliminary Plan Review to the Planning Commission.
- If the Planning Commission approves Preliminary Plan, the final layout of the development will have been determined by the Commission, and the Applicant will have exact areas to propose to the Council for re-working of the dedication maps.
- Applicant will then return to the Council with exact requests for re-working the dedication maps, and make the final request for such before the Council.

## CONCLUSION

- We recognize this issue may be confusing to those who are reviewing this for the first time, so we welcome any questions and/or clarifications, and thank the Council for their time and attention.
- We welcome any suggestions or concerns of the Council we can be able to address them as early in the subdivision process as possible.

The Council thanked Attorney Ardent for the presentation. After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Council that they support the concept that was presented.

23. Correspondence

12/04/2024 – Mary Worobec – wants the Town and School to ensure energy and climate in the new middle school, offer a US DOE curriculum on Solar as a CTE program, and expressed concerns that Fishing Cove and Hamilton are situated in areas prone to flooding.

12/12/2024 – Meg Kerr – requested an update from the Town on actions to address climate as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

12/19/2024 – Stacy Weinstein – expressed frustration regarding the recent appointment to the Library Board of Trustees.

12/19/2024 – Donna Hutchinson – expressed concern about the hours of pickleball play at Wilson Park.

01/02/2025 – Nayelis Johnson – inquired about North Kingstown's affordable housing percentages and how to become involved with this issue.

01/02/2025 – Everett Stuart – suggested exploring to acquire the State Police barracks for a permanent town office building

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

Jeannette Alyward  
Town Clerk