The York Independent

Old York Historical Society (Subscriber)
P.O. Box 312
York, ME 03909

Locally owned and operated
Founded 1999

Committed to an informed electorate.

Volume 3 - Issue 21

Wednesday, May 1, 2002

www.york-independent.com

50 Cents

Showdown looms for zoning rewrite

By Michele Martin

A showdown is looming between the Planning and Ordinance Committee and residents of York Village and York Harbor neighborhood groups over the direction of the new zoning rewrite.

In recent months, both the York Village Association and the York Harbor Neighborhood Association have taken the committee to task for allegedly not adhering to the Comprehensive Plan and its purpose statement.

At last Wednesday night's televised meeting at the York Library, York Harbor resident Helen Rollins Lord told committee members they had complained in the past about hearing; "the same things over and over" from the public, but warned that this would continue unless the committee did three things.

She said the committee should demonstrate its responsiveness by acknowledging issues raised repeatedly by citizens, secondly, they should demonstrate that they understand what people were saying, and thirdly that the committee should incorporate those changes into the proposed zoning ordinance accordingly.

Among the recurring concerns of residents have been fears that the proposed new ordinance would allow for increased density and smaller lots which would continue to fuel residential growth in the town.

Rollins Lord added that she wanted to preserve the quality and atmosphere of the Town, and would not give these things away. In her opinion, she said, everybody in York wanted the rewrite process to be successful, but she did not feel that the process had always been respectful to the people of York. She stated that the zoning ordinance was a document that could; "make or break this town."

As Rollins Lord began to encourage members of the public to write their selectmen about the issue and to provide a mailing address, committee vice-chair Susan Trowbridge asked her to sit down. Rollins Lord ignored Trowbridge and the two women continued to talk over each other for several minutes.

At a previous meeting of the committee, Rollins Lord's mother, Helen Rollins, also spoke to the committee about her concerns that it was not listening to the public.

Members of the York Village Association have also been vocal opponents of zoning standards that would increase density in the Village, and have predicted that the ordinance will not pass voter approval if the committee

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Bid to boost parking fines irks beach merchants

A proposal by the York Police Department to increase the amounts of parking tickets and ordinance fines will be the subject of a public hearing following resistance from York Beach merchants at Monday night's workshop meeting of the Board of Selectmen at the library.

Chief of Police Doug Bracy presented a new schedule of fines he said would mark the first increases in 25 years and help further defray the cost of the town's parking enforcement program and better regulate the town's parking issues.

Since 1977 the price of a parking ticket in York has been $10 – increased to $15 if paid after 48 hours.

Bracy said: "People from Boston and New York think $10 for parking is a bargain."

Selectmen Allen Lifvergren agreed saying: "I get tickets all the time, and so do all my relatives, because I think $10 is a good deal."

However, Selectman Carole Allen said she paid a $15 fine last year after incurring a ticket while judging a sandcastle competition on the beach when she could not find a legal parking place, and she asked if a permit might be issued for town officials engaged in official business.

Bracy said he was open to suggestions.

The proposed increases were:

- From $10 to $15 for parking meter and overtime violations, doubled to $30 after 48 hours.
- From $10 to $50 for fire hydrant violations and $100 after 48 hours.
- From $10 to $100 for handicapped parking violations in accordance with state law.

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Quote of the Week:

'Tobacco companies have more credibility than health care companies.'
–York High School senior Steve Morgan asking gubernatorial candidate John Baldacci last Friday what he would do about health care costs.



York turns out in strength to rededicate E. Paul Smith Field

*York Independent sports reporter **Adam Kilgore** is a member of the York High School baseball squad and participated in Saturday's moving rededication ceremony.*

The busiest tourist attractions of York may be the Nubble Lighthouse and the pristine beaches but the locals know that one of the most charming places in York is the E. Paul Smith Field. This spring marks the 32nd consecutive year that Smith Field has been home to York Little League, giving 10-12 year-olds the chance to play and learn the games of baseball and softball.

York residents have always appreciated the joy that children experienced playing on the field but had never officially thanked the late Helen Smith, who donated the land in the name of her late husband.

On Saturday, York's Little League president, Gordon Lewis, expressed the town's lasting gratitude through a grand rededication ceremony and parade in honor of the Smith family, namely their surviving daughter June Smith Johnson. It was a tremendous event and a very proud occasion for York Little League.

The day began with a parade featuring all of York's 21 Little League teams, including both baseball and softball, along with members of the middle school baseball and softball teams and the high school baseball and softball teams for a total of an estimated 500 kids. Leading the players on the small journey from York High School to Smith Field was the YHS marching band and York's American Legion, and tailing the ensemble were two fire trucks.

Once the parade reached the field, the teams gathered around the infield, where Lewis presided over the ceremony. York Middle School music teacher Gina Branigan began the ceremony with the national anthem while state representative Mary Andrews raised the flag atop the freshly painted flagpole behind center field.

Next, Reverend Linda Hurst said a prayer that expressed the crowd's gratitude for having beautiful spring days perfect for Little League, and also memorialized Al Cole, Joe Kane, and Norman MacDonald, three great contributors to York Little League.

Lewis then introduced Johnson, her husband Roy, and their children, the grandchildren of the field's patriarchs. He told the story of how E. Paul Smith had once played sandlot baseball on the field as a boy and one day had hoped to turn the land into a park. Upon his passing, his wife Helen made that possible by donating the land to York Little League, and ever since the field has been used by countless boys and girls.

After the enjoyable history lesson, all three Little League oaths were said, with emphasis on sportsmanship and placing the well-being and development of the players ahead desire to win. The parent Code of Ethics reading was lead by Marilyn Zotos, who was followed by league vice-president Peter Gilmore reading the coach's Code of Ethics.

Minor leaguer Josh Thorton, who is personally mentored by Lewis, led the Little League Pledge.

"He grew up two years at that podium," Lewis said after the ceremony. "That was a huge moment in that kid's life."

After the pledges, the crowd sang: "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" to get into a baseball mood before the first pitch of the season was thrown out. Paul Johnson, the grandson of E. Paul Smith and Helen Smith, pitched a high looping throw to Matt Haight of the Major League Athletics who made a stellar catch.

The band brought the ceremony to a close by singing: "God Bless America," and even though the beach was less than a mile away, there was nobody there who would rather have been anywhere else at that moment than Smith Field.

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