

Local

Save the Bay joins fight against condos

MIDDLETOWN — Save the Bay has joined the Norman Bird Sanctuary in its plea to preserve the Gray Craig estate. Save the Bay is urging both Middletown and Newport residents to challenge the proposed condominium development for Gray Craig.

Gray Craig, located on Paradise Avenue, abuts the 450-acre Bird Sanctuary on Third Beach Road. The Bird Sanctuary is talking with the Gray Craig developers about buying part or all of the estate, easements or developmental rights. Sanctuary officials are worried that plans for renovating and building on the Gray Craig estate will destroy the natural beauty of the area and

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cause environmental problems.

Gray Craig developers Robert Kempenaar, Alexander Grande and Thomas Dimeo plan to build 56 single-family, duplex and multi-family housing units on the 80-acre estate. Save the Bay, like the Bird Sanctuary, would support an alternative development plan which would provide an environmental buffer, according to a statement released by William Driscoll, land use coordinator for the environmental group.

The development proposal needs Planning Board approval before it can proceed. Save the Bay urged its

Aquidneck Island members to write to the Middletown Planning Board and the Coastal Resources Management Council requesting a review of the developers' proposal.

Save the Bay said it is worried that the development could "degrade the scenic value of the bird sanctuary's ridgeline trails, and infringe upon a large open space and wildlife habitat that includes the Norman Bird Sanctuary, Sachuest Point Refuge, Second Beach, Third Beach, Gardiner Pond, Nelson Pond, St. George's School and the Gray Craig property."

"If enough people speak out about

this condominium proposal, the public stands an excellent chance of preserving the natural beauty of the Gray Craig estate," Driscoll said.

Sanctuary officials have cited concern for possible contamination of area wetlands including Paradise Brook and Nelson's Pond, environmental damage caused by the intrusion of people on the estate and an adverse scenic impact as trees are removed and granite ledges are leveled to make room for housing.

When Kempenaar and his partners bought the Gray Craig estate, formerly owned by the van Beuren family, about 2½ years ago they paid \$2.5 million.

Jamestown may lease Country Club restaurant

JAMESTOWN — The Town Council is considering leasing the Jamestown Country Club restaurant as a banquet facility.

Town officials welcomed the proposal, submitted by Kinnecom Caterers of Saunderson.

"It does relate very well to the existing building and existing opera-

bit with some negotiation."

The caterer, Andrew S. and Martha C. Kinnecom, proposed a three-step 20 year lease, with the rent figure increasing after the business becomes established. Under all three steps the Kinnecoms would pay all utilities and maintenance costs, as well as make capital

year or \$1.25 and \$1.75 a person, using the same ratio as in step one, whichever is greater.

The third part of the lease would be for 15 years with five year reviews. The rate per person would remain the same as in step two, but the alternate annual rent would be \$24,000. The town would receive the

• Requested volunteers for a new police station study committee. Appointment of the committee was placed on the agenda for the Feb. 27 Council meeting.

• Reorganized the town's Recreation Department by appointing rec director Jay Primiano as Parks and Recreation Director and Matt Bolles