

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 24 July 2003

TO: Jamestown Planning Commission

FROM: Jamestown Conservation Commission, J. Christopher Powell, Chair

SUBJECT: High Groundwater Table Ordinance – Application of Forge Construction Management, Inc. – AP 15, Lot 102.

At the July 23rd meeting of the Conservation Commission we reviewed the information provided by Forge Construction requesting relief from Section 314 – High Ground Water Table and Impervious Layer Overlay District Ordinance.

As you are aware the recent passage of this very important ordinance provided a critical tool for the Town to control unsuitable development in areas of the Island where high ground water compromises the effective treatment of human waste in Individual Sewage Disposal Systems. There has been more than adequate documentation (University of Rhode Island, 1997) of well contamination by improperly functioning ISDS in the Jamestown Shores area, the area of the proposed development. Any request for variances to this ordinance should be carefully reviewed and taken very seriously.

The Conservation Commission, by unanimous vote respectfully requests that the Planning Commission STRICTLY enforce this ordinance. Any variance request that cannot meet the minimum impact requirement of the ordinance should be denied. It is the Conservation Commission's opinion that the applicant has not met the minimum impact standards as required by the ordinance and their request for relief should therefore be DENIED.

Since this is the first case to come before the Town asking for relief from the High Ground Water Table and Impervious Layer Overlay District Ordinance it is imperative that we strictly enforce this ordinance. Granting the first variance to this ordinance will open the flood gates of variance requests and make the ordinance virtually unenforceable. Variances should be the extreme exception and not the rule.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important issue, the future of water quality on Conanicut Island is in your hands.

University of Rhode Island. 1997. *Ground Water Quality of Northern Conanicut Island, Jamestown, Rhode Island.*

CC: Jamestown Town Council