

WORK SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

At a WORK SESSION of the Town Council of the Town of South Kingstown, County of Washington, in the State of Rhode Island, held at the Town Hall, in and for said Town on the 23rd day of March 2026 at 6:32 PM.

PRESENT: Rory H. McEntee, President
 Michael K. Marran, Vice President
 Patricia A. Alley
 Deborah D. Bergner
 Jay G. Wegimont

Also present: James Manni, Town Manager; Amy Goins, Town Solicitor; James Gorman, Building Official; Brian Silvia, Finance Director; Wendy Duarte, Town Assessor; Jessica Spence, Executive Assistant

1. A. WORK SESSION

James Manni, Town Manager, introduces a Work Session relative to the proposed development and implementation of a Homestead Exemption Program and thanks staff for their work in preparing the presentation.

The Town Manager reviews past Homestead Exemption Work Sessions and the number of parcels on the tax roll, noting that the Homestead presentation is based on the certified 2025 tax roll. He presents a breakdown of the property types that comprise the tax roll and the number of eligible single-family properties, which represent 80% of the total number of single-family properties. The eligible properties were isolated based on the local tax bill address. He continues to review the number of parcels per assessed value range and the total tax levy on all taxable property.

The Town Manager reviews the Homestead Exemption options presented at previous Work Sessions. A 10% Homestead Exemption was examined but was discounted due to the high tax burden that would be shifted to other taxpayers. A 5% Homestead Tax Exemption including residential condominiums was proposed with property value caps of \$400,000, \$500,000, and \$600,000 considered. Each scenario presented a loss of tax revenue and would need to be offset by an increased tax rate.

He presents a second option of a flat credit amount for all seniors aged 65 years and older. A third option is shown for income based Elderly Exemptions that are currently applied to 168 seniors, plus tax credits of either \$150, \$175, or \$200. He continues to explain a fourth option, to increase elderly income qualifications to align with Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) statistics. He presents a comparison of COLA and HUD and the effects of the exemptions on the tax rate.

Discussion ensues relative to the cost of the program and the impact of an increase in exemptions on the tax rate.

The Town Manager states that the goal tonight is to pick a scenario so that staff may refine the option and notes that rental registration numbers will be available by the next Work Session.

WORK SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

Discussion ensues relative to the impact of reconciling the 2024 Statistical Revaluation, an explanation of personal exemptions, demographic shifts increasing the number of seniors in Town, the number of owner and non-owner occupied condominiums in Town, and House Bill H7567 allowing elderly, disabled, and Veterans to defer taxes.

Amy Goins, Town Solicitor, will review the legislation and give a report to the Council at a future meeting.

Discussion ensues relative to exemption eligibility using COLA and HUD statistics, placing the income brackets on the Town Schedule of Fees or imbed them in the Town Code of Ordinances to increase with either COLA or HUD, the current rolling deadline for exemption enrollment, and the impact of deferment of taxes on Town revenue.

The Town Solicitor clarifies House Bill H7567 and notes that the bill includes funding from the State.

Further discussion ensues.

The Town Council reaches consensus to continue the Work Session relative to the proposed development and implementation of a Homestead Exemption Program to the April 27, 2026 meeting for further discussion and requests that the Town Solicitor give an update on House Bill H7567 at that time.

Convened to Regular Session.

Emily R. Houle
Town Clerk

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

At a REGULAR SESSION of the Town Council of the Town of South Kingstown, County of Washington, in the State of Rhode Island held at the Town Hall, in and for said Town on the 23rd day of March 2026 at 7:38 PM.

PRESENT: Rory H. McEntee, President
Michael K. Marran, Vice President
Patricia A. Alley
Deborah D. Bergner
Jay G. Wegimont

2. REGULAR SESSION

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance is given.

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

The Land Acknowledgement Statement is read.

3. ROLL CALL

Roll Call is taken and all members are present.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A. Work Session: UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: that the minutes of the Work Session held on March 10, 2026 are accepted, approved, and placed on file.

B. Regular Session: UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: that the minutes of the Regular Session held on March 9, 2026 are accepted, approved, and placed on file.

C. Closed Executive Session: UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: that the minutes of the Closed Executive Session held on March 9, 2026 are accepted.

5. APPOINTMENTS – None

6. CONSENT AGENDA

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to approve the Consent Agenda as indicated by (CA) on same.

(CA) A. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to grant a Victualling License for the year beginning December 1, 2025 to Nitaya Eakapon LLC d/b/a Luk Thai Cuisine, 249 Main Street, Wakefield, RI 02879. Application by Wongphajan Phothisen, Owner. Renewal; License No. 61915.

(CA) B. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to authorize an award of contract to Eurofins Rhode Island, 646 Camp Avenue, North Kingstown, RI 02852, from April 1, 2026 to January 31, 2029, for water

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

analytical services as required by the Department of Health, in an amount not to exceed \$14,500 per fiscal year at unit pricing in accordance with State MPA 48 Analytical Laboratory Services, and as further described in a purchasing recommendation from the Director of Public Services to the Town Manager dated March 11, 2026, entitled "Award of Contract, Water Testing and Analysis."

(CA) C. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to authorize the Town Assessor to abate taxes in the amount of \$8,510.11, as shown on Tax Abatement Request No. 661.

(CA) D. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to authorize an award of contract to NewGen Strategies & Solutions, 900 Bestgate Road, Suite 402, Annapolis, MD 21401 for advisory services relating to the Town of South Kingstown and Narragansett RI Public Utilities Commission Docket No. 25-30-WW, in an amount not to exceed \$12,500, as further described in a purchasing recommendation from the Director of Public Services to the Town Manager dated March 19, 2026, regarding "Expert Advisory Services, Veolia Request to the PUC for Rate Increase."

7. LICENSES

A. Pedro Augusto Cuevas Reyes is present, and after testimony and discussion it is

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to grant a Victualling License to El Macuto Restaurant LLC d/b/a El Macuto Restaurant, 99 Fortin Road, Kingston, RI 02881. Application by Pedro Augusto Cuevas Reyes, Owner. New; License No. 92560.

B. Quinn Earley is present, and after testimony and discussion it is

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to grant a Victualling License to Jacks Place, LLC d/b/a Jacks Place, 501 High Street, Wakefield, RI 02879. Application by Quinn Earley, Owner. New; License No. 92308.

C. Matthew Lyons is present, and after testimony and discussion it is

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to grant a Victualling License to 456 Opco, LLC d/b/a Mews Tavern, 456 Main Street, Wakefield, RI 02879. Application by Matthew Lyons, Representative. New; License No. 92251.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS – 30 Minutes

Council President McEntee invites residents to come forward with comments.

Lorraine Miller Horton expresses concern about pedestrian safety due to the lack of sidewalks and crosswalks on Kersey Road and references her recent email to the Town Council requesting the installation of a traffic speed camera.

Discussion ensues.

Communications A is brought forward.

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

Richard Bourbonnais, Public Services Director, reviews research into installing a crosswalk on Kersey Road, discussions with residents regarding easements through their properties, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) approval for sidewalks, the intention to make application to eligible grants for project funding, and the installation of variable speed signs in school zones.

The Town Manager notes that a traffic study conducted by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) did not recommend installing a crosswalk at the end of Paddy Hill Road.

Discussion ensues relative to seizure of private property by eminent domain.

The Public Services Director continues discussion relative to temporary versus permanent easements for the intention of crosswalk installation.

Ms. Horton notes that she would be willing to agree to a temporary crosswalk easement until sidewalks are built.

Further discussion ensues relative to the request to include Kersey Road sidewalks in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget, the failure to qualify for grant funding in the current year, short-term traffic safety measures until sidewalks can be built, and the cost of building a crosswalk.

The Town Manager notes that the RIDOT traffic study findings indicated that there is a line-of-sight issue at the proposed crosswalk site at the end of Paddy Hill Road and that there is not enough traffic on the Kersey Road to warrant the crosswalk.

Council Vice President Marran further notes that South Kingstown Police Chief Matthew Moynihan expressed similar concerns relative to traffic speed and line of sight on Kersey Road and that a crosswalk exists at the intersection of Kersey and North Roads.

Discussion ensues relative to options to improve pedestrian safety, the distance between crosswalks on Main Street, and the potential of a temporary easement.

The Town Solicitor notes that temporary easements are not typical between a municipality and private owner and that a licensing arrangement is more likely.

Further discussion ensues.

The Town Council reaches consensus to continue discussion of the installation of a speed camera and sidewalks on Kersey Road to April 27, 2026, with issuance of an invitation to Chief Moynihan to participate in the discussion.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Notice having been duly given, a Public Hearing is held relative to an application for transfer of a Class B Victualler Liquor License from A&S Investments, LLC d/b/a Terminesi's Café, 501 High Street, Wakefield, RI by Albert Terminesi, Partner to Jacks Place, LLC d/b/a Jacks Place by Quinn Earley, Owner.

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

Quinn Earley testifies.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to close the Public Hearing.

B. Notice having been duly given, a Public Hearing is held relative to an application for transfer of a Class B Victualler Liquor License from Yankee Foods, LLC d/b/a Mews Tavern, 456 Main Street, Wakefield, RI by Jeff Cammans, Manager to 456 Opco, LLC d/b/a Mews Tavern by Matthew Lyons, Representative.

Matthew Lyons testifies.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to close the Public Hearing.

New Business 10A is brought forward.

A. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to affirm the Town's Liquor License Rules and Regulations, Section I. The current number of licenses for each class shall be authorized as indicated below, unless changed by a majority vote of the Town Council:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Number</u>
A - Retail	4 maximum
B - Victualler	33
B - Tavern	1
B - Limited	5
B - Hotel	1
B - M	0
C	0
D - Club Privilege	1
D - Limited	0
F	Five per year per organization
F - 1	Five per year per organization
J - Limited	1
T - Legitimate Theater	2

Public Hearings A and B are brought back for consideration.

A. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to grant an application for transfer of a license to keep and sell alcoholic beverages in South Kingstown in accordance with the General Laws of 1956, as amended, as follows:

CLASS B VICTUALER LIQUOR LICENSE

Transfer of a Class B Victualler Liquor License from A&S Investments, LLC d/b/a Terminesi's Café, 501 High Street, Wakefield, RI by Albert Terminesi, Partner to Jacks Place, LLC d/b/a Jacks Place by Quinn Earley, Owner for the first floor bar and dining areas; and as further defined in a site plan on file in the Town Clerk's office.

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

Said transfer is contingent upon the issuance of a Certificate of Good Standing from the Rhode Island Division of Taxation, filing of a Certificate of Insurance evidencing required liability coverage, compliance with all Town ordinances and regulations, the payment of any municipal taxes and user fees in arrears to the Town, the correction of any fire code violations, and the satisfaction of all claims.

B. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to grant an application for transfer of a license to keep and sell alcoholic beverages in South Kingstown in accordance with the General Laws of 1956, as amended, as follows:

CLASS B VICTUALLER LIQUOR LICENSE

Transfer of a Class B Victualler Liquor License from Yankee Foods, LLC d/b/a Mews Tavern, 456 Main Street, Wakefield, RI by Jeff Cammans, Manager to 456 Opco, LLC d/b/a Mews Tavern by Matthew Lyons, Representative for the for the first and second floor, mezzanine and third floor lounge including a 40 foot expansion, as described in the Special Exception granted April 20, 1994 and Special Use Permits granted September 17, 1997 and January 21, 2004 by the Zoning Board of Review, and additional tavern area in accordance with a Special Use Permit granted on February 20, 2013; and expanded service area at the rear of the existing building within the existing parking lot, consisting of a curbside pickup kiosk and hostess station with dining seating and border/separation from the parking and vehicle access, approximately 8,000 square feet, in accordance with a Special Use Permit granted March 17, 2021 by the Zoning Board of Review; and as further defined in site plans dated March 7, 2013 and April 14, 2021 on file in the Town Clerk's office.

D. Notice having been duly given, a Public Hearing to consider proposed amendments to the Town Code, Chapter 11 Nuisances, Article III. Construction Activities, Section 11-26 Exemptions. is held.

Amy Goins, Town Solicitor, reviews the proposed establishment of an exemption to construction activities on Town-owned property in conjunction with Town Council approved school construction projects and notes that advance notice would be required for all activities outside of the times set force in the Town Code.

Mark Moore, Gilbane, reviews upcoming construction activities that may require work past 9:00 PM to pour and cure concrete.

Discussion ensues relative to the curing process being weather-dependent, notice to abutters, expected noise from equipment, and the intent of the ordinance amendment.

The Town Manager recognizes the concerns of residents and notes that if this amendment is not granted, the timeline for school project completion would be extended.

Discussion ensues relative to the anticipated frequency of construction activities outside of normal working hours between 9:00 PM and 7:00 AM.

The Town Solicitor notes that school construction activities are typically bid as first shift.

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

Discussion ensues relative to the impact if the ordinance were not amended, penalties for not abiding by the ordinance parameters, enforcement by the Building Official, and procedures for redrafting the ordinance if requested.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to close the Public Hearing.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to amend the Town Code, Chapter 11 Nuisances, Article III. Construction Activities, Section. 11-26 Exemptions, as follows:

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 11 OF THE ORDINANCES OF THE TOWN OF SOUTH KINGSTOWN

The Town Council of South Kingstown hereby ordains that the Code of the Town be amended as follows:

Chapter 11 - NUISANCES

* * *

Article III. – CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

* * *

Sec. 11-26. - Exemptions.

The provisions of this article shall not apply to:

- (1) The operation of snow removal equipment at any time provided that such equipment shall be maintained in good repair so as to minimize noise. Noise discharged from exhausts shall be adequately muffled so as to prevent loud and/or explosive sounds;
- (2) Lawn care and grounds maintenance equipment in normal daytime use if used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications;
- (3) Public emergency activities required to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the citizenry.
- (4) The normal day to day agricultural activities associated with the raising of livestock and crops.
- (5) Construction or demolition activities conducted on property owned by the Town of South Kingstown, provided that such activities are associated with a specific project that has been expressly approved by the Town Council by resolution, and that advance public notice of such authorized construction activity is provided.

* * *

This ordinance shall take effect upon passage.

C. Notice having been duly given, a Public Hearing is held to consider proposed amendments to the South Kingstown Town Code, Chapter 19 Utilities, Article III. Water Supply, Division 8 Penalties and Division 10 Water Supply Restrictions, as follows:

AMENDMENTS TO THE TOWN CODE

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

CHAPTER 19 – UTILITIES

* * *

ARTICLE III. – WATER SUPPLY

* * *

DIVISION 8. – PENALTIES

* * *

Sec. 19-292. - Fines.

Any person who shall continue any violation beyond the time limit provided for in section 19-291 shall have service discontinued and be subject to a fine not exceeding ~~one~~ five hundred dollars (\$4500.00) for each violation. Each day in which such violation shall continue shall be deemed a separate violation.

* * *

DIVISION 10. – WATER SUPPLY RESTRICTIONS

Sec. 19-318. Imposition of restrictions on use of water supply.

(a) Purpose. The purpose of this section of the rules and regulations is to provide for a means of conserving the town's supply of potable water and to minimize the risk associated with excess water demand by restricting the use of water on occasions of actual or anticipated shortages and when deemed necessary for the health, welfare or safety of the town residents.

(b) Applicability. The provisions of this section shall apply to all properties within the town that receive potable water from Veolia Water Rhode Island Inc. (or its successors) and South Kingstown Water Districts.

(b) Duration of restrictions for lawn and landscape irrigation. Irrigation of lawns and landscaping shall be restricted to two (2) days per week in accordance with the following schedule (Refer to Irrigation Map 1 - South Shore and Irrigation Map 2 - Veolia/Middlebridge):

DISTRICT 1: USE OF SPRINKLERS FOR LAWNS AND LANDSCAPING ALLOWED ON MONDAY AND THURSDAY ONLY – Irrigation Map 1, West of Moonstone Beach Road and Irrigation Map 2, West of the Saugatucket River.

DISTRICT 2: USE OF SPRINKLERS FOR LAWNS AND LANDSCAPING ALLOWED ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY ONLY – Irrigation Map 1, East of Moonstone Beach Road and Irrigation Map 2, East of the Saugatucket River (including SK Middlebridge customers).

No sprinkler operation will be permitted in any district between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. or on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday; however, hand watering of flowers and/or vegetable gardens is permitted at any time.

(c) Imposition and removal of more stringent restrictions. When the director anticipates a lack of water availability or a shortage of potable water, based on weather conditions, drought conditions, and patterns of water consumption, the Town, in cooperation with Town public water suppliers, may institute more stringent restrictions. While such restrictions are in effect, the director shall certify weekly in writing to the town manager the water consumption of the preceding 7-day period for the South Kingstown South Shore and Middlebridge water districts. If, on the basis of daily records, present and anticipated weather conditions, patterns of consumption and after consultation with

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

Town public water suppliers, the director determines that the danger of shortage of potable water has ended, the director shall forthwith remove any and all restrictions theretofore imposed. Notice of the removal of such restrictions shall be published by the director in the same manner in which notice of the proclamation and restrictions was given in the first instance.

(d) Enforcement. The director shall diligently enforce this section in accordance with Division 8 of this article.

(i) In-ground sprinklers. Use of in-ground sprinklers shall be in accordance with the following:

(1) All connections to a public water supply for the purpose of irrigation of lawns and landscaping shall be protected by a backflow device as specified in the state building code plumbing regulation SBC-3, dated May 1, 1997, or as revised.

(2) Every person making connection to the municipal water system for the purpose of irrigation of a lawn and landscaping installed after May 1, 1998, shall apply for a permit with the town building official as specified in the state building code plumbing regulation SBC-3, dated May 1, 1997, or as revised.

(3) All connections to the municipal water system for the purpose of irrigation of lawns and landscaping should have as part of the installation a rain switch device to prevent the initiation of the irrigation sequence in wet weather conditions.

(4) All connections to the municipal water system for the purpose of irrigation of lawns and landscaping should have as part of the installation a pressure-reducing valve set to limit the water pressure applied to the irrigation system to at or below 60 psi (per square inch).

(5) All connections to the municipal water system for the purpose of irrigation of lawns and landscaping should have as part of the installation sprinkler heads capable of delivering no more than five gallons per minute flow per sprinkler head at 60 psi (per square inch).

* * *

This Ordinance shall take effect upon passage.

Rich Bourbonnais, Director of Public Services, reviews proposed amendments to restrict irrigation to two days a week in the areas of the South Shore/Middlebridge Water District and the Veolia Water District. He continues relative to amendments made in response to concerns of residents, the intention to promote water conservation by restricting aerial irrigation, work performed with the assistance of Tracey Owens, GIS Coordinator to balance the number of homes in watering districts, and the potential of further amending the ordinance to be active from Memorial Day or Labor Day, with the option to extend past Labor Day if the Town is experiencing drought conditions.

Discussion ensues relative to enforcement and penalties for violation, conservation awards won by Veolia in other states, and rebates to residents.

Chris Jacobs, Veolia, responds and outlines rebate programs being developed in Rhode Island.

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

The Public Services Director continues relative to the ability to monitor water usage, the usage threshold that will trigger a site visit, and the efforts by Public Services Department staff to coordinate resources related to conservation education.

Chris Jacobs notes that peak usage times can be viewed on the Veolia website.

Discussion ensues relative to conservation education, additional notification to heavy users, and the effect of winter precipitation on aquifer levels.

Chris Jacobs responds.

Further discussion ensues relative to the active enforcement period of Memorial Day to Labor Day and between the hours of 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, the violation timeline for correction, clarification of aerial and hand watering methods, issuance of Notices of Violation for pattern-based usage, and the impact on farms and livestock owners.

The Town Solicitor recommends an exemption for agricultural operations water usage.

Discussion ensues relative to the application of the ordinance to homeowners with private wells and the number of homes using private wells in Town.

Council President McEntee invites residents to come forward with comments.

Kathryn Willis Thomas expresses concerns about the proposed ordinance and suggests a willful waste ordinance instead.

There being no further comments, it is

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to continue to April 27, 2026 a Public Hearing relative to proposed amendments to the South Kingstown Town Code, Chapter 19 Utilities, Article III. Water Supply, Division 8 Penalties and Division 10 Water Supply Restrictions with direction to staff and legal to make changes as discussed.

Discussion ensues relative to willful waste and the intention of the ordinance.

The Town Solicitor asks the Council's disposition on a farm exemption.

The Town Council reaches consensus that farms should be exempted in the ordinance.

Discussion ensues relative to abuse of water resources not otherwise cited in the ordinance.

10. NEW BUSINESS

B. **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED:** to authorize an award of contract to W.B. Mason Interiors, 99 Bald Hill Road, Cranston, RI 02920 for furniture purchase and installation at the Peace Dale Library Community Learning Center, in an amount not to exceed \$32,982.65 to be paid for by the Friends of the Peace Dale Library and/or the Peace Dale Library Community Learning Center Services Expansion Grant Project (project #24019), and as further described in a memorandum from the

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

Library Director to the Town Manager dated March 13, 2026, entitled "Award of Contract – Furniture, Peace Dale Library."

C. The Town Manager reviews rate increases requested by Veolia Water Rhode Island, Inc. for the Towns of South Kingstown and Narragansett and notes the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Public Hearing scheduled for March 30, 2026 in the South Kingstown Town Council Chambers.

Discussion ensues relative to the Public Hearing being rescheduled from Narragansett to South Kingstown, sending notice to residents, a rate study being performed, and the reasons for reliance on Veolia as a supplier.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to adopt a resolution in opposition to the rate increases requested by Veolia Water Rhode Island, Inc. in Docket No. 25-30-WW and request the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission to deny the requested rate increase as presently proposed, as attached hereto.

D. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to approve the Town Manager's appointment of Emily Houle as the Town Clerk, effective March 23, 2026, as further described in a memorandum from the Town Manager to the Town Council dated March 17, 2026, entitled "Town Clerk Appointment."

11. TOWN SOLICITOR'S REPORT

A. Amy Goins, Town Solicitor, reviews changes to the Low and Moderate Income (LMI) Housing Law regarding comprehensive permit application processes effective January 2026.

The Town Solicitor clarifies the 10% quota of affordable housing that must be met in each municipality per State regulations. If the quota is met and the municipality has inclusionary zoning, the community will be exempt from comprehensive permit applications. If the quota is unmet, the municipality is subject to mandatory minimum density bonuses which increase the allowable number of units to be built, provided that at least 25% of units are considered affordable.

Discussion ensues relative to mandatory minimum density bonuses.

B. The Town Solicitor reviews House Bill H8249, which relates to comprehensive permits by asking for reinstatement of required findings for denial and counting LMI units when the building permit is filed rather than once the Certificate of Occupancy is issued.

Discussion ensues whether to draft a resolution of support or new legislation.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to draft legislation to support the reinstatement of required findings for denial as presented in House Bill H8249 relating to proposed changes to existing Low and Moderate Income Housing Law.

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

12. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- A.** The Town Manager announces upcoming meetings.

Discussion ensues relative to reporting potholes to the Town.

The Town Manager reviews construction at Old Mountain Field and the project timeline.

Discussion ensues relative to the Farm Forest Program and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management oversight of the properties.

14. COMMUNICATIONS

- B.** The Town Solicitor reviews the Town's Flag Policy and notes that ceremonial flags are permitted.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: that an email dated March 10, 2026 from Stephen Elmasian, Co-Chair, Armenian National Committee of Rhode Island requesting that the Town fly the Armenian flag on April 24th to commemorate Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day is received, placed on file, and the Town Council adopts a resolution as follows:

SOUTH KINGSTOWN RESOLUTION

Proclaiming April 24, 2026 as "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day" to Commemorate the Armenian Genocide of 1915 to 1923, and in Honor of Armenian Americans

WHEREAS, The Armenian Genocide was conceived and carried out by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, and resulted in the deportation of nearly 2,000,000 Armenians, of whom 1,500,000 men, women, and children were killed, and the remaining 500,000 survived but were expelled from their homes. This act succeeded in the elimination of the Armenians from their historic ancestral homeland where they had resided for over 2,500 years; and

WHEREAS, On May 24, 1915, for the first time ever, the Allied Powers of England, France, and Russia, jointly issued a statement explicitly charging another government of committing a "crime against humanity"; and

WHEREAS, This joint statement declared, "the Allied Governments announce publicly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold personally responsible for these crimes all members of the Ottoman Government, as well as those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres"; and

WHEREAS, United States Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Sr. explicitly described the policy of the Ottoman Empire's government to the United States Department of State as "a campaign of race extermination," and on July 16, 1915, was informed by United States Secretary of State Robert Lansing that the "Department approves your procedure...to stop Armenian persecution"; and

WHEREAS, The post World War I Turkish government indicted the top leaders involved in the organization and execution of the Armenian Genocide and in the "massacre and destruction of the

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

Armenians,” and in a series of court martials, officials of the Young Turk regime were charged, tried and convicted, for organizing and executing massacres against the Armenian people; and

WHEREAS, In 1948, the United Nations War Crimes Commission invoked the Armenian Genocide as “precisely...one of the types of acts which the moder term ‘crimes against humanity’ is intended to cover” as precedent for the Nuremberg tribunals; and

WHEREAS, The United States National Archives and Record Administration holds extensive and thorough documentation on the Armenian Genocide, especially in its holdings under Record Group 59 of the United States Department of State, files 867.00 and 867.40, which are open and widely available to the public and interested institutions; and

WHEREAS, The United States Holocaust Memorial Council, an independent federal agency, unanimously resolved on April 30, 1981, that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum would include the Armenian Genocide in the museum and has since done so; and

WHEREAS, When one enters the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, there is an exhibit depicting Adolf Hitler, who on ordering his military commanders to attack Poland without provocation in 1939, dismissed objections by stating “[w]ho, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”, thus setting the stage for the Holocaust; and

WHEREAS, On April 24, 2021, United States President Joe Biden stated, “...we remember the lives of all those who have died in the Ottoman-era Armenian genocide and recommit ourselves to preventing such an atrocity from ever again occurring”; and

WHEREAS, In 1918, after the fall of the Russian Empire, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and the First Republic of Armenia both declared independence; however, shortly thereafter, they became part of the Soviet Union. The modern Republic of Azerbaijan once again proclaimed its independence in August of 1991, shortly before the dissolution of the USSR. Within its borders, however, the predominantly Armenian enclave known as the Republic of Artsakh officially voted to become part of Armenia; and

WHEREAS, Azerbaijan sought to suppress the separatist movement, while Armenia backed it. Turkey has close ties to Azerbaijan and was the first nation to recognize Azerbaijan’s independence in 1991. In 1993, Turkey, in addition to engaging in numerous hostilities, shut its border with Armenia in support of Azerbaijan during the war over the Republic of Artsakh; and

WHEREAS, In Turkey’s continuing aggression and genocide of Armenians that began more than 100 years ago, the 2020 unprovoked war between Azerbaijan, with military support provided by Turkey, and the Republic of Artsakh resulted in Artsakh being forced to return many of the surrounding territories it had occupied for millennia; and

WHEREAS, Beginning in May of 2021, Azerbaijan has been making armed incursions into, and taking lands within, Armenia’s internationally recognized borders including in the Syunik and Gegharkunik provinces; and

WHEREAS, In March through early April of 2022, following several days of escalated tensions, Azerbaijan’s military open fired on Armenian military posts along the western part of the Armenia-

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

Azerbaijan border, and days later, shelled various villages, mostly located along the eastern border of Artsakh; and

WHEREAS, Currently, there are no diplomatic relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has continued to ignite clashes and casualties; and

WHEREAS, On January 1, 2024, when faced with the prospect of ruse by Azerbaijan, more than one hundred thousand people, 80 percent of Nagorno-Karabakh's primarily Armenian population, fled to Armenia in one week; and

WHEREAS, Most recently, Azerbaijan's President has stated that opening the Zangezur corridor, which is the Armenian territory separating Azerbaijan from its exclave, Nakhchivan, is a priority;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the South Kingstown Town Council hereby recognizes April 24, 2026, as "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day" in the Town of South Kingstown; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the South Kingstown Town Council hereby respectfully requests the President of the United States and the United States Congress to call on the government of Turkey to face history and acknowledge this crime of genocide committed by the Ottoman Turks in 1915, and urge the Turkish government to make restitution for the loss of lives, confiscated properties, and general unlawful deportations, separating the indigenous population from their homeland; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the South Kingstown Town Council expresses its deepest sympathy to the Armenian-American community of South Kingstown and assures them that this genocide will always be commemorated and never forgotten.

Adopted this 23rd day of March 2026.

C. No action is taken relative to an email dated March 16, 2026 from Marisa Salisbury concerning a budget request for repairs to the playground at Wakefield Elementary School.

D. Council Member Alley reviews House Bill H8018 relating to proposed changes to the State Building Code requiring a minimum of two means of egress and requests a resolution of support.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: that an email dated March 19, 2026 from Council Member Patricia Alley requesting support for House Bill H8018 relating to proposed changes to the State Building Code requiring a minimum of two (2) means of egress consisting of standard exterior doors, is received, placed on file, and the Town Council requests that a resolution of support be sent.

E. Council Member Wegimont reviews House Bill H7911 and Senate Bill S3012 relating to the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging and Paper Act.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: that emails dated March 19, 2026 from Council Member Jay Wegimont and Council Vice President Michael Marran requesting support for House Bill H7911 and Senate Bill S3012 relating to the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging and Paper Act are received, placed on file, and the Town Council directs that a resolution of support be sent.

REGULAR SESSION

MARCH 23, 2026

F. Council Member Wegimont reviews a request for a proclamation recognizing March 25, 2026 as National Medal of Honor Day on behalf of Sharon Henderson.

Discussion ensues relative to requesting that the Housing Authority rename the Champagne Heights and Fournier Estates developments to include Medal of Honor recipients Corporal David B. Champagne's and Sergeant William G. Fournier's military titles.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: that an email dated March 19, 2026 from Council Member Jay Wegimont requesting a proclamation recognizing March 25, 2026 as National Medal of Honor Day and to display National Medal of Honor Day banners on Main Street is received, placed on file, and the Town Council adopts a proclamation as follows:

MEDAL OF HONOR TOWN

WHEREAS, the Town of South Kingstown, Washington County, Rhode Island, was established in 1657 and incorporated in 1723; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the town have always answered our nation's call to arms and have fought gallantly in all of our nation's armed conflicts; and

WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor is the highest military award for bravery that can be given to any individual in the Armed Forces of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor was awarded to Sergeant William J. Babcock, Company E, 2nd Rhode Island Infantry for his actions on April 2, 1865, at Petersburg, Virginia, Sergeant William G. Fournier, U.S. Army, Company M, 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division for his actions on January 10, 1943, at Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, and Corporal David B. Champagne, U.S. Marine Corps, Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division (Reinforced) for his actions on May 28, 1952, in Korea; and

WHEREAS, South Kingstown appreciates the sacrifices that our Medal of Honor recipients made in defending our freedoms and believe it is important that we acknowledge them for their courage and show them the honor and support that they have earned.

WHEREAS, South Kingstown is the only designated Medal of Honor Town in Rhode Island and one of only three in the United States, alongside Pueblo, Colorado, and Weymouth, Massachusetts.

NOW THEREFORE WE THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SOUTH KINGSTOWN hereby proclaim March 25, 2026 as **NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR DAY** and South Kingstown as a **MEDAL OF HONOR TOWN**.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to adjourn at 10:18 PM.

Emily R. Houle
Town Clerk