

# SLOTS: Each machine is projected to bring in \$367 a day

■ Continued from Page 1

Landry said.

After the first year of operation, growth would be of between 3 percent and 5 percent annually, Landry said.

Each slot machine would bring in \$367 a day, making Rockingham Park the sixth most successful slot operation per machine on the East Coast, according to the projections.

The Innovation Group has been within 10 percent accuracy on 90 percent of their projections. But Jim Rubens, spokesman for the Granite State Coalition Against Expanded Gambling, says it is a new era for the American gambling industry, one that The Innovation Group has never had to make projections in.

"The industry is declining—it's saturated," Rubens said. "Consumers are changing, the 25-year

pattern of consumers going into debt is in reversal. That's not going to change in a year."

Foxwoods Casino in Connecticut recently laid off 700 employees, and legislation for casinos appears to be tabled by Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick.

But Millennium Gaming spokesman Richard Killion pointed to The Meadows, a racetrack run by Millennium in western Pennsylvania. That venue has had slots since 2006 and it has seen revenues increase from 2007 to 2008, Killion said.

"The Meadows has performed very well during this," Killion said.

The explanation of the revenue numbers comes after Fix It Now NH, the group aimed at bringing slots to Rockingham Park, introduced themselves to the public last week. The group said allowing video slots at Rockingham

Park could be part of the solution to the state's budget shortfalls.

The revenue projections released yesterday are based on a 50 percent tax on slot profits, 18 percent higher than legislators proposed in Massachusetts last year, but similar to rates in Florida, Delaware and Pennsylvania.

If legislation to allow slots at the park is approved, Millennium Gaming has promised to take over the track and renovate it. William

Wortman, a Millennium executive, holds a 20 percent stake in Rockingham Park.

Along with renovating the inside of the venue and adding thousands of slots, improving the track also is in the plans, Killion said. Those renovations would include a new grandstand and a new track, he said.

If Rockingham Park is to sustain itself as a gaming venue, it must be able to introduce video

slots, Landry said. Owners of Hinsdale Greyhound Track, one of the state's four racetracks, announced this week they were filing for bankruptcy.

"It's very difficult (for racing) as an industry to survive," he said. "Even with simulcast."

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► Salem: Rockingham Park

12/19/08  
Tribune

## Study projects \$200 million in slots revenue

By JARRET BENCKS

[jbencks@eagletribune.com](mailto:jbencks@eagletribune.com)

Adding video slot machines to Rockingham Park could generate as much as \$200 million a year for New Hampshire, according to a recent study.

*About 70 percent of the customers were expected to come from Massachusetts, with most of the remaining customers coming from New Hampshire.*

Last week, a statewide group proposed adding video slots at Rockingham Park. If that happens, Millennium Gaming pledges a \$450 million renovation to the park.

The study was conducted by The Innovation Group, a consulting company for the gaming industry.

The revenue projection is based on 3,000 video slot machines being installed at Rockingham Park. It also takes into account average annual income in the area and

area population density.

About 70 percent of the customers were expected to come from Massachusetts, with most of the remaining customers coming from New Hampshire, according to Matthew Landry, vice president of The Innovation Group. Most of the customers would come from within 25 miles of the operation.

"The vast majority is based on the local market,"

Please see SLOTS, Page 4

12/12/08

# The Eagle-Tribune

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STREAKING CELTS: TEAM OFF TO ITS BEST START EVER. PAGE 9

## Storm coats region in ice, towns lose power

By JOHN BASILESCO  
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A winter storm slipped into the region coating roads and tree limbs with ice, forcing the cancellation of activities, and causing numerous power outages last night.

A winter storm warning was posted for the entire state. The National Weather Service said the southern and western regions of the state were being hit with a major ice storm last night and into this morning.

The storm was expected to dump up to 12 inches of snow in northern New Hampshire and cause coastal flooding before it ended.

The storm left ice hanging on tree branches that started to fall in Derry, Danville, Kingston, Windham and Londonderry. Roads were closed so the debris could be cleared.

The towns of Danville and Kingston were without power as of 9 last night, a dispatcher for the Rockingham County sheriff's office said.

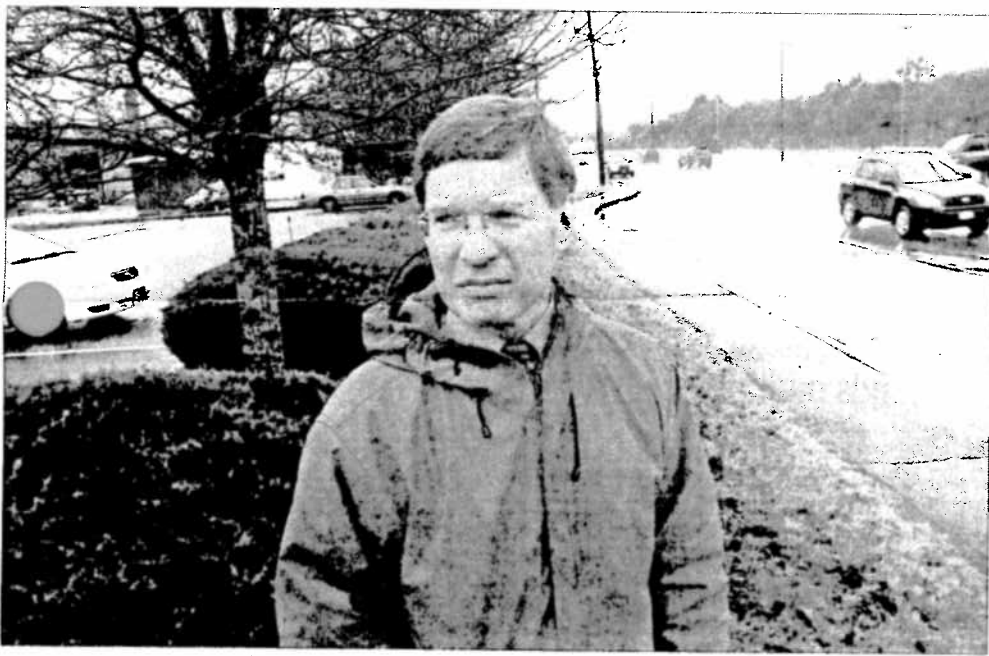
In Londonderry, a tree fell near Bancroft and Mammoth roads and police had to respond when a car drove on top of it.

A partly cloudy sky with a chance of showers were expected for later today, with clearing tonight and temperatures between 15 and Tomorrow's forecast sun with temperatures 25 and 30 degrees.

Yesterday afternoon

Please see 5

## Long-term planner



ALLEGRA BOVERMAN/Staff photos  
Ross Moldoff has been Salem's planning director for 25 years. One area along Route 28 that he has helped to beautify in town is the intersection around the Post Office, Citizens Bank and Rite Aid.

## Salem's planning director marks 25th year on the job

By JAMES A. KIMBLE  
jakimble@eagletribune.com

SALEM — It was his first day on the job when selectmen decided to fire his boss.

"On my third day at work, they actually fired him and I thought, 'Oh, my God, what have I gotten myself into?'" Planning Director Ross Moldoff recalled.

The ousting of Salem's town manager was an early lesson in town politics for Moldoff, now known for surviving waves of upheaval at Salem Town Hall over the years.

To-day, Moldoff marks his 25th anniversary as Salem's planning director. He has seen the town through some of its most controversial periods and helped usher in its largest commercial projects.

That includes the 1988 development of the Mall at Rockingham Park, which spans 1 million square feet and brings thousands of people into town every day. The mall and its anchor stores alone bring \$3.4 million in annual tax revenue to Salem.

Moldoff, 51, is credited with establishing many of the standards developers must meet when



Ross Moldoff looks over maps in his office.

Please see MOLDOFF, Page 7

## Police: \$60,000 stolen from woman's employer

### Woman was working at Insight Technology

By MARGO SULLIVAN  
msullivan@eagletribune.com

LONDONDERRY — A former Insight Technology has been accused of almost \$62,000 from the company.

Meredith Moore-Flores, 30, of M charged Wednesday with falsely expensing \$19,986.90 worth of merchandise, which was never actually purchased for her former employer. She also allegedly presented two tuition reimbursement requests totaling \$42,665 for course work at Bentley University in Waltham, Mass., although she was not enrolled at the school.

Insight Technology reimbursed Moore-Flores \$61,986.90 in total, police said.

Moore-Flores was released on \$25,000 recognizance. She is due in court Jan. 14.

Moore-Flores told police she "may" but she doesn't think she is a criminal. She was charged with five counts of deception for allegedly stealing the money.

Sept. 11 and Nov. 6, while she was an administrative assistant at the multi-state contractor on Akura Way.

Please see MOORE-FLORES, Page 7

## Making holiday spirits bright

### Local group helps provide Christmas gifts for foster children

By BILL KIRK  
bkirk@eagletribune.com

One hundred dollars doesn't go as far as it used to.

That's how much Massachusetts foster

### Mystery Santa

### NH dancers perform in 'The Nutcracker'

By MARGO SULLIVAN  
msullivan@eagletribune.com

## MOLDOFF: Many changes in Salem

■ Continued from Page 1

they want to build in Salem. When he arrived in 1983, the six-mile stretch of Route 28 was a cobbled-together commercial strip that had buildings constructed from the 1950s to 1970s.

"There was a lot of pavement but not a lot of trees," Moldoff said.

And there weren't a lot of standards, either. Planners rarely asked for traffic studies. No one thought about adding shrubbery or trees in between parking spaces on the long retail stretch.

Moldoff's office, tucked away in a far corner at Town Hall, has a wall-sized map of Rockingham County from 1860 that once belonged to his grandparents. A collection of rocks and shells from the beach sit alongside ceiling-high rows of books about planning and development.

A "Far Side" comic strip betrays his quiet sense of humor. It shows a Godzilla-sized monster standing before a cityscape, befuddled by a sign that reads, "You must be as tall as this sign to attack city."

It's from this office Moldoff crafted a philosophy that has slowly changed the look of Salem.

Many national retailers now have to conform to New England-style architecture instead of standard big-box development. They are required to plant trees and shrubbery around their buildings or parking lots, and sometimes make substantial infrastructure improvements.

One of the largest of those was secured last month when the developer for a Lowe's store agreed to \$2 million in road improvements for a notoriously congested section of Route 28.

Early in his career, Moldoff was a key witness in a federal corruption probe of a Salem Planning Board member. That member was later convicted in a bribery scheme.

"I learned of the investigation when the police chief called me. He said, 'If you have a suit coat, put it on and come to my office,'" Moldoff said. "I asked, 'Am I in trouble?' And he said, 'I don't know, are you? The FBI wants to talk to you.'"

The board was already roiling with political turmoil when Moldoff took the job in December 1983.

"I remember when Ross first came in to the Planning Board, it was very politically organized, with deep divisions between development interests and nondevelopers," said Larry Belair, a Planning Board member in the 1970s and 1980s. "And many of the bigger battles had a strong political undercurrent. Ross did an excellent job of steering clear of the gunfire — and the salvos launched by the various competing interests. It couldn't have been easy for him to come to a new community, learn the needs of the town, and balance his efforts in a way that would keep him above the fray."

Belair is the first to admit he didn't agree with all of Moldoff's ideas back then.

## BALLET: NH dancers have key roles in 'The Nutcracker'

■ Continued from Page 1

American Ballet Theater in New York until an injury sidelined her, noted the "caliber of dancing is very, very good."

Some of the dancers are semiprofessionals who have studied at some of the best dance schools in the United States.

Emily Aubrey, 14, of Sandown, for example, devotes two and a half hours a day, six days a week, to dance at the Boston Ballet Company's school. She is a freshman at Timberlane Regional High School. Although school keeps her busy, she invests time in ballet because she loves to perform, she said.

"Really everything we work for in ballet is all to get on the stage and perform for people," Emily said.

She started dance lessons at age 3 and hopes to become a ballerina with one of the major companies.

"She works really hard, and she knows it's a tough field," her mother, Lori Aubrey, said.

So far, Emily has landed an understudy role in the Boston Ballet Company's production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Although she did not perform that time, she has progressed to the intensive level at the Boston Ballet Company's school.

"As you move up in levels each year, you're closer to becoming part of the company," the 5 foot 3 inch ballerina said.

Although she's only 14, she feels age will not hold her back with the Boston



Clara, played by Angela Franklin, adores her new nutcracker during the New England Civic Ballet dress rehearsal of "The Nutcracker."

Ballet.

"It's more a measure of how talented you are," she said. "Some dancers are in at 16; they are home schooled."

Emily also has danced in past productions of the New England Civic Company's "The Nutcracker." She sees the stage at Merrimack College's Rogers

Center as a great of ballet.

Monique Welch Hampstead spend dancing.

"I do aspire to do she also said. "Ob doing it, it's one o also get a lot out c lot of discipline the learn anywhere e.

In addition to cipline of dance c respect their tea try their hardest.

Monique, a sem emy, has studied i sive program at tl of Ballet in New Y the harlequin doll flutes in this prod would like to dan said.

"I don't really h but I like "The Nu because of the ho one in the mood."

One New Hamp leading role in th Mercedes Nigl the Snow Queen. the Joffrey Ballet

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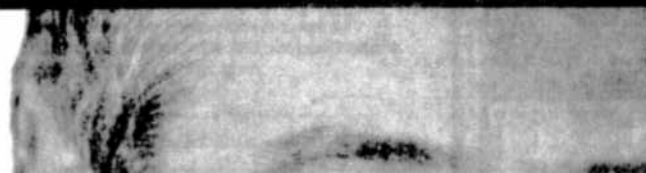
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Salem.

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Belair is the first to admit he didn't agree with all of Moldoff's ideas back then.

"In many of those years, at the annual December public hearing on zoning amendments, it wound up with me on one side and him on the other. We were literally head to head," Belair said with a chuckle. "He won his share, I feel I won my share of them, but somewhere in between, there was a balance of the interest, and the town was able to adopt some ordinances that enabled Salem to move forward and grow in a measured way."

Moldoff said there is no particular bit of wisdom that led to his longevity.

"A lot of it is dumb luck," he said. "I have no particular skills with that per se. I've aligned myself with the Planning Board, which was part of my job."

He credited former members such as Belair for giving him critical guidance in those early years.

Moldoff became interested in land use when he moved from suburban Detroit to Portsmouth during his junior year of high school.

He lives in Salem with his wife, Amy, and his two daughters, Allison and Emily.

♦ ♦

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# ZONING: Proposal to guide future if racing ends at Rock

■ Continued from Page 1

without asking taxpayers to foot the bill.

Planners have been talking to representatives at Rockingham Park hoping to avoid a protest over a similar zoning amendment proposed in 2002. Park management filed a protest with the town, which raised the threshold needed for passage at the polls and the amendment fell short of approval by about 2 percent.

At the time, planners feared the park could close its doors in the face of declining revenue and sell its property to an outside developer who could bring nothing but big-box retail stores.

"The prospect of that type of development that the board was afraid of a few years ago

has greatly diminished," said Selectman Michael Lyons, a representative to the Planning Board.

The latest amendment would allow Rockingham Park to expand its facility without going through the new planning process to allow for more racing or legalized gambling.

"It reflects a significant compromise in that horse racing and gaming is excluded," Lyons said. "Certainly there's a great sense among the community leaders in town that type of activity would have a positive revenue impact for the town."

Sen. Lou D'Allesandro, D-Manchester, plans on proposing another bill to bring gaming to the state's four racetracks.

But the Legislature and Gov. John Lynch have remained uninterested, saying they worry

about gambling affecting the state's quality of life.

Ed Callahan, the park's president, could not be reached for comment on the zoning amendment yesterday. Town officials said the meetings with Rockingham have been "positive," but it's uncertain if it will fight the amendment as in the past.

Planning Board Chairman James Keller said the latest zoning amendment is designed to address parcels aside from the Rockingham Park property, which spans 170 acres. The Mall at Rockingham Park, the town's former sewage treatment facility and the old Rockingham Park are the only other properties large enough to fall under the new proposal.

But Keller said the amendment would encourage large

landowners to accumulate up to 25 acres so they could qualify for the give-and-take planning.

"The board has been talking about this for a long time ... about how we can further manage a process where we have large parcels of land and have an opportunity to do mixed-use development such as retail, commercial and housing," Keller said. "How we can create an opportunity to develop something in a way that the board and the developer have an opportunity to collaborate on what the actual development might result in?"

The board is continuing to work on the proposal, along with seven other rule changes that are to be refined by late December. A public hearing on the proposals is expected in early January.

► Salem

11/20/07

# Plan pushes mixed use if track closes

## Zoning proposal aims to thwart 'cookie cutter' or big-box stores

BY JAMES A. KIMBLE  
jkimble@eagletribune.com

**SALEM** — The town is taking steps to ensure Rockingham Park could be successfully redeveloped if racing ended there.

Only three other properties in Salem would be affected by a proposed zoning amendment, including the Mall at Rockingham Park. Landowners with more than 25 acres in a commercially zoned area along Interstate 93 would be part of a new master plan process that encourages mixed-use development.

The zoning amendment also would allow the Planning Board to request such things as a pedestrian-friendly downtown area — something planners said Salem has desperately needed for years. In exchange, the board could approve aspects of a plan usually handled by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Planning Director Ross Moldoff said such a process has been used with success around the country to give towns something better than cookie-cutter or big-box development.

"We would get a different type of process," Moldoff said. "The

*"The thought is to get something that's different, not just the strip centers we usually get."*

Planning Director Ross Moldoff

developer would come up with a master plan for the whole parcel. The Planning Board would say, 'Here's what they want to see, maybe more of a downtown type of development.' The thought is to get something that's different, not just the strip centers we usually get."

Over the years, the board has used its influence with large-scale developments to bring value-added assets to Salem.

Last month, the board approved redevelopment of an antiquated strip mall at the state line into a Lowe's.

The developer agreed to bring \$2 million in road improvements to a stretch of Route 28 that runs alongside the property. That section of road was already overburdened with traffic, so town officials saw it as a win to bring improvements to the area

Please see ZONING, Page 6

## FARM: Trail possible by January

Continued from Page 1

John and Mike Peters. Work on the land would not begin until April, Carter said.

"It's allowing them to find affordable housing for some one they are associated with," Carter said.

The deal, if approved, would be similar to a case in which the school district once leased a house it inherited on Main Street, he said. Money earned from the Hawkins Farm lease would go back to the town, Carter said.

Talks also have been underway to lease some of the farmland to

John and Mike Peters. Work on the land would not begin until April, Carter said.

In the mid-1980s, the farm was largely used for growing corn. Carter said the Peters might not be the only people farming the property. He would like to see a site where residents could have vegetable gardens.

Hawkins Farm is at 38 Town Farm Road, just west of Captain Pond. The property now is part of a block of conservation land that abuts five acres of conservation land Salem bought in 1997.



PULITZER PRIZE WINNER

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## Residents may soon stroll Hawkins Farm property

### Walking trail in future for \$950K Salem purchase

By JAMES A. KIMBLE  
jkimble@eagletribune.com

**SALEM** — A walking trail at Hawkins Farm may open this winter, creating a new avenue to enjoy wooded views of the Spicket River.

The town bought Hawkins Farm, a 18-acre property, for \$950,000 in August. It was one of the largest land purchases Salem has made in a decade.

"The walking trail would be to the edge of the property. There's a lot of beautiful scenic areas you can't see from the road," Planning Director Ross Moldoff said. "It's all in the talking stages right now, but they're all good, positive plans."

Conservation Commission Chairman William Cater said members will first walk the property to lay out an exact path and determine what kind of work is

needed to build the trail.

The commission plans to meet with selectmen to get their permission to lease two parts of the farm. The commission wants to see if it can lease the house on the property through the Salem Housing Authority. Carter said the housing authority would make the home available to a low-income family.



Hawkins Farm on Town Farm Road in Salem will eventually be open to the public. The town purchased the property this summer.

JAN SEEGER/  
Staff photo

Please see **FARM**, Page 6

# Lowe's ready to build

BY DERRICK PERKINS

perkins.derrick@gmail.com

Construction of the new Lowe's includes a \$2 million infrastructure investment that could mean smooth driving for motorists on a portion of the Route 28 corridor.

The agreement between the Lowe's developers and the Planning Board came after a year and a half of negotiations that made moderating the expected influx of traffic on an already bogged-down swath of Route 28 the key to any proposal for redeveloping the existing plaza.

According to Jim Keller, director of the Planning Board, developers were given the green light to begin a phased construction of the new Lowe's on Tuesday, Oct. 28.

"A lot of work went into this. It was a pretty substantial process," Keller said. "The town and the board had to deal with pure impact of the increasing volume of hundreds of cars on a daily basis. How do you deal with an influx of that many vehicles not only on Route 28, but the surrounding roads?"

To meet the concerns of town officials, developers have agreed

to a \$2 million upgrade of the stretch of the corridor running from Methuen, Mass., into Salem that will include widening the road, dedicated turning lanes and three brand new interconnected traffic lights.

Another \$2 million will be spent on improving drainage conditions around the \$20 million, 200,000-square-foot development that will include a bank, Staples office store and a Namco store.

According to Planning Director Ross Moldoff, traffic mitigation remains one of the toughest challenges for any business looking to develop along Route 28.

"A lot of time and money is spent by applicants going into (infrastructure) improvements. What can the applicant can do so that the traffic isn't any worse than it is now? Keep it the same or make it better," he said.

Plans to redevelop the existing Coca-Cola bottling plant further up Route 28 have slowed as developers struggle to cope with the traffic situation in the Salem Depot area. Though smaller individual retailers might have trouble dealing with traffic conditions, Moldoff said the infrastructure improvements asked for by the town are not cost prohibitive for larger developers.

Redeveloping existing underused properties like the Lowe's plaza or the Coca-Cola bottling

plant, has become a cornerstone of the town's master plan, according to Moldoff. Encouraging developers to invest in existing properties increases the town's tax revenue and spurs economic growth.

"What we get when we get redevelopment - people going into existing areas, older underutilized buildings - we get more tax revenue and that's very important, as well as additional jobs, new stores," said Moldoff. "We get a new upgraded building."

The construction of the new Lowe's building and plaza is expected to be completed over the next 18 months. Developers began talking with the town about the proposal about three years ago, according to Keller.

After eight months of serious work with the Lowe's developers that rivaled the process that brought in both the North Salem Wal-Mart and the Mall at Rockingham Park, Keller said the redevelopment will prove a definite asset to the town.

"The plaza itself is going to generate some pretty significant influx of consumers which will help the other businesses, not to mention the restaurants. It's an economic generation engine," Keller said. "From a corridor standpoint, that will draw people to that end of Salem and ideally that will draw them further into Salem."

► Salem

# Lowe's, Route 28 upgrades coming

Driving will be easier on  
now busy stretch of road

By JAMES A. KIMBLE  
jkimble@eagletribune.com

**SALEM** — The approval of a new Lowe's will mean \$2 million in improvements to congested Route 28.

Plans for the recently approved store include a massive \$8 million redevelopment of the surrounding properties and Route 28. That work doesn't include the Lowe's itself, which is expected to open by the summer of 2010.

Town planners said the project will transform a congested section of an old retail strip into a well-landscaped set of stores with easier driving along one of Salem's busiest stretches of road.

"There's no question that site has been recirculated for many years," Planning Board Chairman James Keller said. "It's been 10 years or longer since Purity Supreme was there. That site, in terms of its retail value, hasn't been maximized,

## LOWE'S: Store approval will usher in \$2M in road work

■ Continued from Page 1

particularly with it being on the state line. It's a prime site for something significant."

The redevelopment will bring a brand-new Sovereign Bank and freestanding Staples store, replacing ones already there. The Namco store will get a new facade.

The complex will get a new traffic signal that will be coordinated with others along Route 28. A \$2 million drainage system will be installed, which is expected to prevent flooding in the area during storms.

Developers plan to widen Route 28 from Methuen, Mass., to the Lawrence Road intersection. Several pieces of private land were bought to widen the road so drivers get a center turning lane on Route 28. It's one of several improvements planned for the area.

Road work could begin by April 1 and be complete by late September, said Marc LaVoie, of W/S Development Associates. The work will be done in phases, much like a highway project, LaVoie said.

"We can't completely shut down the road," he said. "We have to maintain the traffic flow so there may be lane closures, but we will not completely shut down the road."

Salem Planning Director Ross

Moldoff said the official submission did not come to the Planning Board until six months ago, but developers began talking to town officials in 2005.

"The traffic was the big nut that had to be cracked," Moldoff said. "They took that on and took a really good job satisfying the Planning Board. They're making a tremendous amount of improvements."

Moldoff said the Planning Board, which approved the project Tuesday night, required developers to not only mitigate whatever added traffic Lowe's might generate, but to improve the overall traffic flow there.

Keller said developers had the challenge of improving what was already a failed road for many years.

To simply add a major store that would attract thousands more drivers "would kill the corridor and kill commerce in Salem, so it had to be much more dramatic than that," Keller said.

The construction project is believed to be one of the largest since Wal-Mart came to town in the late 1990s. That retail giant spent \$1 million for traffic improvements along Route 28 and at the Route 111 intersection.

The Lowe's will be 155,000 square feet and its construction will be one of the last phases of the project.



## NEW HAMPSHIRE

by Mikaela Engert

### NEW HIRES

Eric Steltzer was recently hired to fill the Energy Policy Analyst position. Most recently Eric had been working at the Rockingham Planning Commission in Exeter as a Regional Planner and developed a Regional Energy Master Plan to guide local community energy efforts. Eric received his Masters from University of New Hampshire and his Bachelors from Colorado State University. His studies have focused on renewable energy development, environmental policy, and natural resource management.

Farzana Alamgir was recently hired to staff the Office of Energy and Planning's State Data Center and to provide additional support for Municipal and Regional Technical Assistance. Farzana has an undergraduate degree in Architecture, with a Masters in City and Regional Planning from Ohio State University. She recently moved from Columbus, Ohio, where her previous job was with DeJONG Inc., in Dublin, Ohio, a firm that provides educational facilities planning. Farzana will be working in the State Data Center in preparation of the 2010 census and SmartGrowth initiatives. Her interests are environmental planning and SmartGrowth are her fields of interest.

### MODEL SMALL WIND ENERGY SYSTEMS TECHNICAL BULLETIN

As a result of **HB310** (<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2008/HB0310.html>) an act allowing municipalities to regulate small wind energy systems, the Office of Energy and Planning will be developing a technical bulletin relative to model municipal ordinances for the construction of small wind energy systems which should be available in September.

### NEW DIGS

Planning Consultant Bruce Mayberry announced that he has moved to the office campus at Pineland Farms in New Gloucester, Maine. His new email address is [bcmplanning@securespeed.us](mailto:bcmplanning@securespeed.us) and the telephone number is (207) 688-8433. The business address is 49 Pineland Drive, Suite 202B, New Gloucester, ME 04260.

### OTHER NEWS FROM NH PLANNERS

Jeff Gowan reports that Pelham is working with the DOT on a Town Center traffic project that entails 2 roundabouts. The DOT has employed their Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) approach, which Jeff says is a wonderful change in process. The project is bumping up against the usual local political quagmires but it is still alive and moving forward.

Ross Moldoff, Planning Director for Salem will be celebrating **25 years** as the Planning Director in December! According to Ross, that's second to Dave Holden in Portsmouth for current longevity in a single town. Congrats, Ross!

Ross also reported that the Salem Planning Board is currently reviewing site plans for new **CVS pharmacies at 3 separate locations in Salem!**

Planning Director, Rhett Lamb, reports that the City of Keene, NH is wrapping up its six-month **community visioning process**. Keene's process was inspired by Portsmouth's use of study circles to engage residents in small-group discussions about the community's future. Keene's version took on a different focus and we called our study circles "Visioning Conversations"; and they were a huge success! Two rounds of visioning conversations were held and approximately 1,200 people participated in the process in total, ranging in age from 12 to over 70! We had 42 facilitators trained to help run the Visioning Conversations and in the end, over 40 small-group discussions occurred. The aspect that is most impressive: the community drove this process and very little was done in terms of traditional marketing and outreach to draw in participants. A majority of it was done word-of-mouth by the Steering Committee, interested citizens, volunteers, and our community facilitators. The vision and core community values statements are in the drafting phase and we hope to have it endorsed by the community and approved by Council in September/October. The Next Step: an RFP will be issued in the fall for incorporating the vision and core community values into a comprehensive master planning process, tentatively scheduled to begin in late November.

THE RESULTS OF  
THE NH PLANNER'S  
MEMBERSHIP SURVEY  
ON LEGISLATIVE  
AND POLICY ISSUES  
CAN BE FOUND AT  
[NHPLANNERS.ORG](http://NHPLANNERS.ORG).

# Fund-raising for depot restoration enters 2d phase

Committee aims to get word out

By Erin Cahill

GLOBE CORSE SHAWMONT

Once seen as the center of the town's transportation system, halfway between Boston and Concord, N.H., on the Boston and Maine Railroad, the century-old Salem Depot Train Station is now a crumbling historic landmark that over time has been reduced to a local eyesore.

The Salem Depot Station Restoration Committee, in conjunction with the Salem Historical Society and Historical District Commission, has set out to rejuvenate the old structure, hoping to alleviate more than 100 years of wear and tear.

Plans for restoring the station have been in the works since 2006. Last year, the committee officially joined with the Salem Historic District Commission to coordinate efforts to raise funds and plan construction on the ramshackle train station.

Restoration committee mem-

ber and former town manager Henry LaBranche said they are now launching "phase two" of the fund-raising plan.

"The next fund-raising step is a communications effort to get the word out to the community," said LaBranche.

Within the next week, the committee will send out a mass mailing to community members seeking support. They have also applied for several grants to fund the restoration, including one from the state of New Hampshire that would classify the project as tax-exempt and encourage local businesses to contribute.

Local community activist Dianne Paquette started the restoration project in 2006 to save the building from being torn down. Paquette was determined to raise funds independently without charging local taxpayers.

"Everything that has been done to it has been done with donations," Paquette said.

The eight-member restoration committee has already collected \$60,000 in donations and



DIANNE PAQUETTE

The photo shows the Salem Depot Train Station, located at the intersection of Main Street and Route 28 in Salem, N.H., before the restoration work began.

contributions, including a \$10,000 grant from the Methuen Festival of Trees. Beverly Glynn, chairwoman of the Historic District Commission, said the restoration project is about one-quarter completed. According to Glynn, the committee hopes to raise a total of

\$210,000 to complete the restoration within the next year. In addition to individual donations and grants, the committee is working on printing a book featuring photos of the old station and drawings from the local middle school students, which LaBranche said they hope

to have out by Christmas. They have also signed up to host one of the Texas Hold 'Em Poker nights at Rockingham Park.

Built in 1867, the depot stands at the intersection of Main Street and Route 28, where it was once a hub of activity, hosting a steady flow of travelers from the Manchester and Lawrence branch of the Boston and Maine, or B&M, Railroad. According to LaBranche, it closed in the mid-1950s, when the train service was discontinued.

The station was later used as a legal office by James Sayer, who sold it to the town in 1996. The building has been vacant since Sayer retired in 2004.

Paquette and the committee have begun to remodel the depot to resemble its original structure, following building plans retrieved from the B&M Railroad archives.

According to Paquette, volun-

teers have gutted the interior, removing asbestos and lead paint, tearing down an addition, and replacing fire-damaged timbers.

The building now has a new roof and chimney, with new windows and doors to come in the next month.

**'Everything that has been done to it has been done with donations.'**

DIANNE PAQUETTE

Community activist

who, in 2006, initiated

the effort to restore the

1867 depot

cases.

Once restored part of the station will house a museum with photos and old railroad ar-

tifacts, such as the original train safe from 1802. The rest of the station will be used as office space or as a visitors center for the Rail Trail, a walking path that runs through Windham, Salem, and Derry, N.H.

For more information on the Salem Depot Restoration Project, visit [www.salemdepotstation.com](http://www.salemdepotstation.com) or call the Salem Historical Society at 603-893-8882.

► Salem

10/3/08 Tribune

# Couple files suit after town rejects kennel proposal

By JAMES A. KIMBLE

jkimble@eagletribune.com

**SALEM** — A couple who planned to build a kennel in a rural neighborhood are now suing the town because those plans were rejected by town planners.

Tom and Donna Richard of Salem are asking a Superior Court judge to toss out the Salem Planning Board's decision on Aug. 26, and give them permission to convert the home into a pet boarding business.

Several neighbors, including Keith BelAir, opposed the Richards' plans, which could have brought 28 dogs and cats to the Galway Lane home. The abutters worried about more traffic coming to their neighborhood and the kind of health problems that could arise from animal waste in the area.

The lawsuit, filed in Rockingham County

Please see **KENNEL**, Page 5

## **KENNEL:** Proposal rejected, couple sues

■ Continued from Page 1

Superior Court, claims the Planning Board did not follow its own rule and voted based on public sentiment.

BelAir said he stands behind the board's decision, saying it was based on more than emotion.

"One of their rules is they should look at how it affects the town residents and its immediate neighborhood and that's exactly what they did," he said yesterday.

But the couple's lawyer, Thomas MacMillan, said the board was required to approve the project, despite neighbors' complaints.

"While the Richards realize that their proposal was certainly not a popular one with

either the board or the abutters, this is not the criteria the board had to take into consideration of their site plan application," MacMillan wrote.

Neighbors have been fighting plans for the kennel since late 2006. MacMillan contends his clients hired traffic consultants and commissioned an environmental study to alleviate the board's concerns about traffic or health problems.

The Planning Board twice rejected the plan after the Richards won one appeal before the town's Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Planning Board Chairman James Keller said yesterday he has not yet seen the lawsuit, but said he believes the board made a legally justifiable decision.

"What I will say is the board

followed the rules and followed the laws, and did what it thought was right," Keller said. "It was a commercial entity and was not right for the neighborhood, and posed a threat to the neighborhood."

Keller said the lawsuit was unfortunate, but expected.

Not everyone had agreed with the Planning Board's decision, which was a 6-0-1 vote. Planning Director Ross Moldoff said the town's Building Department initially concluded the Richards' plan was legal because kennels, nurseries and greenhouses are allowed in areas that are zoned rural. Moldoff said he supported that decision along with the town lawyer.

The town has approximately 90 days to respond to the lawsuit.

# Developers expected to ease traffic on Route 28

By JAMES A. KIMBLE  
jkimble@eagletribune.com

**SALEM** — Redevelopment of the old Coca-Cola plant may hinge on bringing relief to drivers at the nearby Depot intersection on Route 28.

Developers hope to bring a new CVS/pharmacy and six other retail stores, including a drive-up Starbucks and a restaurant, to the Route 28 site.

Planning Director Ross Moldoff said the Planning Board generally approves of the redevelopment, but wants to see a concrete proposal to alleviate whatever added traffic the new stores would bring.

A traffic study shows the new development, which is expected to have three buildings, would bring 606 vehicles an hour on

Please see **TRAFFIC**, Page 5

## TRAFFIC: Developers' plan may ease congestion on busy Route 28

Continued from Page 1

some Saturdays. Those extra vehicles would cause even further backups at the Depot intersection at Route 28 and Main Street, Moldoff said.

Planning Board Chairman James Keller said traffic at the intersection is already a nightmare during rush hour and the morning commute. He said board members have been acutely aware that developers along Route 28 need to improve traffic in the area when they bring in new business.

"The folks in Salem and we on the board are extremely sensitive to (traffic) delays or any situation that will make traffic worse," Keller said.

The board recently accepted a plan that would bring \$2 million in road improvements if a new Lowe's is built on Route 28. Developers for a Wal-Mart also had to make similar improvements in recent years.

Keller said developers for the Coca-Cola site have a variety of options to try to alleviate traffic in the area, but they will most likely

have to do something to improve driving in the Depot area.

Developers Dennis Metayer and Joseph Scott offered to contribute money to the upcoming expansion of the Depot intersection, which is listed on the state's 10-year highway plan. Metayer did not return a phone

call seeking comment.

Town officials are skeptical whether the Depot expansion would get done by the state anytime soon, so they are asking Metayer and Scott to come up with another idea.

"It's on the 10-year highway plan, but it's been on there for

15 years," Moldoff said. "There's no telling when it will ever get done."

Keller said once the traffic issue is resolved, the Planning Board will then get into an in-depth review of the building plans themselves. So far, it's only been a conceptual discussion.



# Business

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### Home business expo planned

Salem Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star is hosting a Home Business Expo on Saturday, Oct. 4, at the Masonic Hall, Main Street, Salem.

Come join other home businesses in promoting your goods and services.

For more information and reservations, contact Jane at 315-8616.

### Web workshop offered

SCORE and CS Wurzbarger, noted Internet marketing expert, will present a workshop called 'Nine Steps to a Web Site You'll Be Proud Of.'

The workshop is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 16, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., at TDBanknorth, 300 Franklin St., Manchester.

Attendees will learn how to plan a site and get results from professionals at the right cost.

The fee is \$30 online or at door.

For details and to make reservations, go to [www.score-manchester.org](http://www.score-manchester.org), or call 666-7561.

### SCORE plans new business workshop

A SCORE workshop on how to start your own business will present practical advice on starting a business, buying one or franchising. Information will be given by experienced professionals from SCORE.

The workshop will be Thursday, Oct. 2, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., at Nesmith Library, 8 Fellows Road, Windham. The fee is \$25 online or at the door.

For details and reservations, go to [www.score-manchester.org](http://www.score-manchester.org), or call 666-7561.

## Business is blooming

### Garden Club chooses Commercial Landscaping Awards

Salem Garden Club has chosen the 2008 annual Commercial Landscaping Awards. A club tradition for the past 21 years, these awards recognize the contributions of the corporate community in making Salem a more beautiful place to live, work and visit.

The Commercial Awards Committee, Claudia Bruce, Linda Dobson, Lyn Higgins, Dot Porter and Town Planning Director Ross Moldoff, toured a number of commercial sites throughout Salem before selecting the 2008 winners.

Six businesses were selected for their use of color, texture, and interesting plant materials in creating a beautiful visual display, often in a very small space. Club rules require that previous award winners wait three years before being eligible to win another Salem Garden Club award. This year, the committee gave honorable mention to recent award winners who, although



T-Bones on Route 28 is one of six businesses in Salem to receive a landscaping award from the Salem Garden Club

ineligible to win an award this year, have continued to design and maintain especially attractive landscaping.

#### Winners for 2008

• Air Planning, Route 97/ Main Street;

• Dunkin' Donuts, Route 28 and Lowell Road locations;

• Ford Flowers, Route 28;

• Mike's Red Barn, Main Street;

• Salem Cooperative Bank, Main Street and Route 28;

• T-Bones, Route 28.

#### Honorable mention:

• Blackwater Grille, Pelham Road;

• Kamal's Car Wash, Route 28.

• JV Crossroads, Route 28.

SalemObserver

# SERVICES

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# Coke plant plans

## Developers, officials strive to build while keeping extra traffic down

BY DERRICK PERKINS  
perkins.derrick@gmail.com

Finding a solution to the notoriously heavy Salem Depot traffic remains a significant challenge for developers who have been working with the town to redevelop the old Coca-Cola bottling plant.

"The (planning) board is certainly open and eager to see something happen there, but not at the expense of adding to the Depot traffic," said Jim Keller, chairman of the town's Planning Board.

After working with owners Joseph Scott and Dennis Metayer of Metascott Development LLC for about a year and a half to find an acceptable plan to redevelop the landmark, town planning officials are waiting to see how the pair plan to keep from adding to a section of town renowned for its traffic hangups.

Keller described the area around the intersection of Routes 28 and 97 – known as the Salem Depot – as a "bottleneck."

"If you travel to the Depot on a weekend or at rush hour in the evening during the weekday, it's extraordinarily painful. The delays are significant and 'gridlock' is the word," he said.

Adding the 200 or 300 estimated extra car trips a day without making any im-

provements to the infrastructure around the bottling plant would only add to the congestion, Keller said.

While the board is behind the most recently revised conceptual plan, Scott and Metayer have put before them – tearing down much of the old structure and erecting three new buildings, including a pharmacy – handling the impact of those 300 extra trips has presented as significant challenge.

Salem's Planning Director Ross Moldoff described tackling the Depot traffic as the "big hurdle" for Metascott.

"(The Depot) is very close to what we consider to be the biggest traffic problem in town," Moldoff said.

Salem requires that new developments mitigate any impact they might have on local traffic conditions. Space constraints on that section of Route 28 limit how much the road could be widened, a strategy used widely during the development of other sections of the commercial strip, according to Moldoff.

"The problem is that there is not much right of way there," he said.

While there has been some talk about adding an extra traffic light and a possible left turn lane, both Moldoff and Keller agree that it is still too early to discuss concrete solutions to the problem, a

sentiment echoed by traffic consultants working with Metascott.

"We're doing process of review with the traffic engineer. We don't want to say too too much," said Jeff Santacruz, of Greenman-Pederson Inc. "We're looking at it from our standpoint and our development. There are some constraints at the intersection. We're working on that right now."

While traffic problems may delay the eventual construction, the redevelopment of the old bottling plant is seen by members of the planning board as part of the revitalization of the Depot. Though the town's manufacturing landmark will likely be mostly, if not completely, demolished, Keller said the new commercial development fit into the larger vision of a future downtown retail area.

"Although there maybe aspects to it they'd like to save, the facade or the clock, the way it is built it isn't conducive to redevelopment in a very nice way," Keller said. "The board, for a number of years, has really sought to enhance, expand and accelerate redevelopment of the retail corridor. The Depot has been the vision of a downtown center district with mixed used purposes. It would certainly be a nice addition to that concept."

## Eating from the garden



Tim Loraditch, a master gardener from Londonderry, taught the Salem Garden Club about edible herbs at the September meeting. The club always meets from 7 to 9 p.m. on the second month in the chapel at Salemhaven on Geresmonty Drive. For more information, call Nancy



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# Reflection

To benefit Children's Hospital at Dartm

## LOWE'S: Planned store's improvements to roads likely to reduce traffic issues in area

Continued from page A-1

with the Planning Board for over a year to decide what upgrades would be needed in order for the newly developed plaza to open in the spring of 2009. If all goes planned, construction could begin over the winter.

According to Moldoff, Salem has a long history of asking developers to make improvements on the town's busiest public roads. When Wal-Mart and Target - also located on the Route 28 strip - came to town, officials asked that the projects include substantial roadwork.

The Mall at Rockingham Park set the record, Moldoff said, with a \$20 million infrastructure improvement plan that upgraded roads as far away as 2 or 3 miles from the actual site.

"They're being asked to mitigate their impact, but because of their new project, they're going

to bring in more traffic," Moldoff said. "They're providing a big benefit to the town because they're fixing or improving a site that is currently pretty congested."

Not all potential developers are asked to make infrastructure improvements for the town. The construction of a Taco Bell fast-food restaurant in Salem did not warrant roadwork, but by contrast, the new Lowe's is estimated to generate enough in revenue to cover the cost of the roadway improvements, Moldoff said.

Right now the proposed site of the Lowe's is what Moldoff called an "underdeveloped shopping center that is largely void of tenants and includes a closed Marshall's department store and an empty supermarket. By the time the newly developed plaza is expected to reopen - with a newly rebuilt Staples office supply store and a Sovereign Bank - Moldoff expects to see a lessen-

ing of traffic congestion on Route 28 rather than an increase.

"The situation will be better after adding the new traffic into Lowe's than it is today," he said.

Keller said the proposed improvements have made the Planning Board comfortable with the Lowe's project.

Because the upgrades will both offset the increased traffic created by the development of the Lowe's store and tackle the already existing congestion, the development will result in a win-win situation for Salem and drivers alike.

"From a town's perspective, it does two things," Keller said. "It was essential that Lowe's mitigate the specific traffic, and secondly the improvement should alleviate the significant congestion that occurs there on a daily basis. From Salem's perspective, it will allow free flowing traffic into town."

# Lowe's to help flow

## Store's road fixes will solve some traffic problems, planners say

BY DERRICK PERKINS

perkins.derrick@gmail.com

A stretch of Route 28 already known for significant traffic entanglements may see some improvement by next year as plans to build a new Lowe's store, which include a \$2 million investment into road work, move forward.

Planning Director Ross Moldoff called the potential road upgrades a "huge benefit" for the town, which he says has not shown any interest in tackling the current congestion problem along the Route 28 strip.

"It's a section of road that is severely congested with massive traffic back-ups that the town hasn't shown any inclination to funding any improvements," Moldoff said. "It's a huge improvement for the town."

The proposed site of the new store, on the border between Methuen, Mass., and Salem, has been known for traffic congestion, according to Moldoff, sometimes handling 35,000 vehicles a day. With a roughly estimated increase of several hundred more car trips per hour on that stretch of road after Lowe's opens for business, officials made improving the roadway a must from the get-go.

"The Planning Board made it pretty clear that we have to solve that problem," said James Keller, chairman of the board. "The board was pretty adamant that in order for that size of a project to occur that those improvements were needed."

Marc LaVoie, project manager for W/S Development Associates, said the potential impact to the already heavily congested roadway had been a major concern working with the town. Upgrades will be made to three intersections - including coordinating traffic lights - and the possible addition of a turning lane to keep traffic moving in either direction.

LaVoie said he had worked

Please see LOWE'S page A-2

## Starts & Stops

TOM LONG

# Lowe's could ease Route 28 traffic

**T**he thousands of motorists who weather the endless blockade of signal lights on Route 28 in Salem, N.H., and Methuen may get some relief under a plan proposed by the prospective developers of a new Lowe's store.

Lowe's wants to build a 150,000-square-foot store in the plaza where the Staples and Hancock stores are in Salem. The developers have proposed widening Route 28 from Methuen up to the Lawrence Road intersection. That would allow for the addition of a fifth, center lane that could be used for turning in and out of stores. That stretch of Route 28 now has two lanes each way.

The traffic plan has been approved by the Salem Planning Board, which has yet to OK the entire project.

"The plan we approved includes not only mitigation of the increased traffic the store will generate, but should improve

traffic flow in the whole area," James Keller, chairman of the Planning Board, said last week. Salem Town Planner Ross Moldoff estimated that Route 28 handles 30,000 vehicles per day. "That doesn't compare to [Interstate] 93, that handles about 100,000 vehicles a day, but it's quite a lot for the town."

Moldoff said the proposal calls for retiming three traffic lights on the Methuen-Salem border. "That would also help the traffic flow more freely," he said.

Moldoff said Route 28 has been a traffic bottleneck for years, but improvements are too expensive for the town. He said the last time the Route 28 traffic flow was improved was in the late 1990s, when Wal-Mart spent \$1 million for traffic improvements along Route 28 and at its intersection with Route 111.

Before that, the Mall at Rockingham Park spent approximately \$20 million on road upgrades around its site, which included the

flyover that drivers take to access the mall from Exit 1.

Keller said he hopes the Planning Board will be able to approve the entire project in the fall.

### Textile bridge closed

Textile Memorial Bridge, on University Avenue over the Merrimack River in Lowell, closed this past Monday for three months of repairs designed to hold the structure over until its scheduled replacement in 2012.

To mitigate traffic on weekdays, the Onellette Bridge on Aiken Street will carry traffic southbound only from 6 to 9 a.m., and northbound only from 3 to 6 p.m.

A six-officer police detail will attempt to move traffic smoothly.

### Cross Street span open

The new Cross Street Bridge over I-93 opened in Salem, N.H., on Aug. 21.

The structure is the first bridge completed as part of the I-93

rebuilding project, which will require the rebuilding or repair of 43 bridges at a cost of \$100 million, 18.3 percent of the entire widening project.

Demolition of the old Cross Street Bridge began this past Monday. The work will take about three weeks and will require some lane closures between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Speaking of I-93, blasting began last week on rock ledges, just south of Exit 5 in Londonderry, N.H. The blasts will take place occasionally between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. The work will continue for about four months and will require sporadic delays of fewer than 10 minutes — for northbound and southbound traffic. State Police rolling roadblocks will control traffic through the work zone during the blasting.

*Starts & Stops appears every other Sunday in Globe Northwest. Questions may be sent to starts@globe.com.*



# New Ha

## Planners reject kennel proposal

By JAMES A. KIMBLE  
jkimble@eagletribune.com

**SALEM** | The Planning Board rejected plans to allow a kennel for 28 dogs and cats at a 2-acre residential lot on Galway Lane, citing health and safety concerns for neighbors.

The decision capped an almost yearlong debate over whether the town should allow Tom and Donna Richards to convert a duplex home in a ruraly zoned neighborhood into a business they called Furry Friends.

Neighbors have been protesting the plan since its inception in late 2006, saying it would lessen their property values, and perhaps create unwanted noise and disease from an abundance of dog waste.

"These are long-term residents here who had quite a bit at stake," said Keith BelAir, a neighbor of the Richards, who protested the kennel.

BelAir, who lived in the Richards home years ago, said the couple seemed to view the house as only an investment, without first considering whether it was viable for a residential neighborhood.

"They had no connection to the neighborhood," he said. "They figured it was a good place to do this and there was not a lot of consideration of what it would do to us — and we took offense to that."

But the effort to build the kennel on Galway Lane may not be over. The Richards could appeal the decision to Superior Court, a move many town officials are expecting, given the project's history so far. Board members voted against the kennel, 6-0, with board member Robert Campbell abstaining.

The Richards' lawyer, Thomas MacMillan, said yesterday appealing the decision might be his clients' most viable option, but the couple is still considering what to do next.

"They're more than a little disappointed, not only with the decision but with the way it's been handled," MacMillan said.

Since December 2007, MacMillan said, his clients spent a considerable sum paying for traffic consultants, an environmental study and other expenses to answer the concerns of the Planning Board and neighbors. The state also approved a septic system plan for the business.

"They have spent a lot of money in doing it, and I think they've addressed every viable issue," MacMillan said.

The decision Tuesday was the

second time the Planning Board has rejected the Furry Friends plan. In February, the Planning Board turned down the Richards' plan, saying the kennel was not allowed in a rural district. But that opinion was contrary to the interpretation of the town's attorney, according to Planning Director Ross Moldoff.

"The permitted uses in rural district include kennels, nurseries and greenhouses," Moldoff said. "Our interpretation (by the building department) was it was a permitted use, and we confirmed that with our attorney."

The Richards appealed the decision to Salem's Zoning Board of Adjustment in April, which agreed with the attorney that it was an allowed business. Throughout the process, Furry Friends has been downscaled and changed in response to concerns heard at a number of hearings, according to Moldoff.

The couple initially proposed having 70 animals on the property and keeping animals outside. Later, the applicants whittled the number of animals down to 50,

then 28, and decided to keep animals inside.

In the most recent application, the Richards supplied the board with a five-page operation manual that covered waste disposal, overnight monitoring and sound-proofing walls, Moldoff said.

Planning Board Chairman James Keller said the board wrestled with ensuring the business would not pose health or safety risks to the neighborhood. The possibility of dogs getting loose while being dropped off and having the business open on weekends were among the concerns the board had, he said.

In recent years, residents have voted to clamp down on allowing businesses within residential areas.

Keller said it's rare the board denies a plan, and the decision wasn't made lightly.

"It's important to note we had a half dozen meetings and we went to great lengths, and the applicant went to great lengths, to make it work," Keller said. "But, in the end, the project just didn't fit."

# Salem has a chance to fix Route 28 mess

The stretch of Route 28 near the Methuen and Salem, N.H., line is a traffic disaster.

North of the area, along Salem's main retail strip, the road widens to accommodate four travel lanes and a center turning lane. For the most part, except on the heaviest shopping days, traffic moves smoothly.

But approaching the state line, Route 28 is just four narrow lanes wide, two lanes each northbound and southbound. There is no turning lane. Traffic is heavy. And when a car tries to turn left, the vehicles behind it must wait until the oncoming cars allow it to pass.

Traffic backs up routinely. On busy weekends, as shoppers flock to tax-free New Hampshire, the road is nearly impassable from Lawrence Road to the Route 213 interchange.

It's a mess. Now, developers want to build a new Lowe's hardware superstore in the middle of it. Fortunately, Lowe's is offering \$2 million in road improvements in the area.

It's a good plan. Salem leaders ought to take the company up on its offer.

Lowe's hopes to build a 150,000-square-foot store in the plaza now occupied by the Staples and Namco stores. The developer would raze the current Staples store and Sovereign Bank, and replace them with new, freestanding buildings.

The road plan calls for widening Route 28 to accommodate a center turning lane.

Other improvements to the area would include a turning lane for Pizzeria Uno, the consolidation of several, individual parking lots on both sides of the road into larger, common lots, coordinating traffic signals to improve traffic flow and new sidewalks.

The changes would improve traffic flow in the area, and not just for customers of the new Lowe's. Two stores on the opposite sides of the border, Ted's Mobil in Methuen and Paysaver Convenience Store in Salem, are big retailers of lottery tickets for their respective states. Getting in and out of these high-traffic locations would be easier.

We're not big fans of communities forcing retailers to pay up for the privilege of building a new store. But in this area, traffic improvements are sorely needed, even without the addition of a Lowe's. The developer is offering to pay for a project Salem would be hard-pressed to fund on its own.

Salem officials are looking carefully at the Lowe's proposal. Here's a chance to make this section of Route 28 a functioning highway again. It looks like an opportunity that's too good to let pass.

# Lowe's offers \$2M in upgrades to Route 28

8/25/08  
Tribune

By JAMES A. KIMBLE  
jkimble@eagletribune.com

SALEM, N.H. — Throngs of drivers who head north along Route 28 between Methuen and Salem are familiar with the backups caused by the lure of tax-free shopping in New Hampshire.

But \$2 million in road improvements proposed by a developer may alleviate some of that traffic congestion.

That's how much developers for a new Lowe's store are proposing for the stretch of Route 28 in the two towns. Lowe's is offering the road improvements to relieve concerns of Salem planners about increasing traffic in an area already known for its clogged roads.

"It's fair to say the principal perspective that the board is taking is we have a pretty dire situation there right now on the border," said James Keller, Salem Planning Board chairman. "Go there any day, particularly a weekend day, and it's gridlock from the Lawrence Road intersection all the way up to (Route) 213."

Please see **IMPROVEMENTS**, Page 5

# IMPROVEMENTS: Roadway upgrades in Salem planned

■ Continued from Page 1

Keller said it's been the board's stance that any additional development in the area would need to dramatically improve the traffic, rather than add to the current problem.

Lowe's wants to build a 150,000-square-foot store in the plaza where the Staples and Namco stores now sit. Plans call for the developer to raze the current Staples store and Sovereign Bank, and replace them with new, freestanding buildings.

Project manager Marc LaVoie expects the entire redevelopment to cost about \$8 million. But that figure does not include the new Lowe's building.

Lowe's will build its own store at the site, said LaVoie, of W/S Development Associates. LaVoie said he hopes the Planning Board will approve the entire site plan by this fall.

If that happens, workers could break ground by this winter. Road work would begin next spring and last through the summer, according to LaVoie.

Making road improvements is nothing new to developers, but LaVoie said having to fix the traffic backup was something exceptional.

"We're in the retail development business, so we want to be where the traffic is," he said. "This particular location has a lot more traffic on it. This (project) is a redevelopment, but this site would probably be a little more than we what usually spend to mitigate and improve traffic."

The Planning Board recently approved Lowe's plan to spend \$2 million to improve traffic flow in the area. But it could still be weeks or months before planners and the developers work out several other issues, including building design and lighting.

State road officials also have to approve the upgrades to Route 28.

If the store is approved, it

could mean widening Route 28 from Methuen up to the Lawrence Road intersection. That would allow for the addition of a fifth center lane that could be used for turning in and out of stores. Currently that stretch of Route 28 has two lanes in each direction.

Steve Pernaw, a town-hired traffic consultant, said widening the road would mean it could handle more cars at any given time.

"It would add to the capacity of the corridor and it would provide a protected left-turn lane for vehicles entering the Lowe's site. ... So, it's going to improve traffic operations and traffic capacity," Pernaw said.

Town planner Ross Moldoff said communities are hesitant to invest in this type of roadwork.

"The towns typically are not making capacity improvements," Moldoff said. "I think the last time in Salem was 20

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

- Pizzeria Uno in Methuen would gain a turning lane - along with the Lowe's which sits on the Salem side of the state line.
- Uno's parking lot would be consolidated with its neighbor, M&N Convenience Store, as part of a plan to build a new, four-way intersection with a traffic light. That intersection would replace one that now sits just south of the plaza where Lowe's wants to build.
- Ted's Mobil Gas Station in Methuen and Paysaver Convenience Store, its next-door neighbor in Salem, also would have their lots consolidated with Lowe's so drivers could drive from one business to another.
- Traffic signals also would be coordinated between Methuen and Salem to smooth out the flow of traffic. New traffic lights would have video monitoring equipment and the ability to let emergency workers control them remotely.

years ago with Pelham Road. ... The reason why is because it's very expensive."

The last time Salem saw road improvements on someone else's dime happened in the late 1990s, when Wal-Mart spent \$1 million for traffic improvements along Route 28 and at its intersection with Route 111. Before that, the Mall at Rockingham Park spent

approximately \$20 million on road upgrades around its site, which included the flyover that drivers take to access the mall from Exit 1.

When the Planning Board called for such improvements with the mall, some residents and state officials criticized the board, with one official calling it "extortion," Moldoff recalled.





8/13/08  
Tribune..

# Special tax districts gain support for funding projects

By JAMES A. KIMBLE  
STAFF WRITER

SALEM — Two proposals now being studied by town officials could change how large projects — such as a new police station or a sewer project — are financed or approved.

Supporters for creating tax-increment finance districts within three areas of town see it as a vehicle for funding projects that have failed to gain support at the polls in years past.

Officials are considering Salem Depot, Route 28 and a nearby industrial park as potential TIF districts. Once the districts are established, subsequent tax increases for TIF district properties would be set aside for infrastructure improvements in the area.

For example, take a property being taxed at \$2,000 a year when the TIF district is established. If the tax bill for that property rises to \$2,300 the next year, \$300 would be set aside for infrastructure improvements.

"I'm anxious to see if this could be used as a tool that could improve an area," Selectman Michael Lyons said.

The proposal is gaining broad support from selectmen and Planning Board members. Town staff members are developing a proposal that could go before voters next March.

It's not the only plan in the works that could change the way Salem decides spending on capital projects.

The Charter Reform Committee is considering whether to change the town's policy that requires a two-thirds majority to approve big-dollar projects.

Town officials have placed some of the blame for the crumbling infrastructure on the need to get approval from 67 percent of the voters, a super-majority. Committee members may recommend revising the Town Charter so only 60 percent voter approval would be needed.

Committee Chairman Daniel Norris said the group has just begun talks about changing the needed vote for major projects. He said the committee will hold a public hearing on its proposals Sept. 5.

If Salem voters decided to create TIF districts next March, they wouldn't be the first to try it out. It's a method already being used in Derry and Goffstown.

Christopher Goodnow, a commercial real estate consultant in Salem, said property owners generally favor increment districts for the same reasons town officials do.

"I can't speak to a specific proposal (in Salem), but the TIF idea is an interesting one because it doesn't bur-

den existing taxpayers, but creates tax revenue," Goodnow said. "Derry has had substantive success off Ashleigh Drive. Clearly, the concept could have some real merit."

Lyons said he envisions a TIF district enabling the town to set aside enough new tax dollars to pay the entire cost of projects that have been long on the books, but could never win enough support at the polls. He is a member of the committee and favors lowering the percentage of voter approval required.

He cited the west side interceptor, a \$3.74 million sewer project, once proposed to expand sewerage to the west of Interstate 93 as a project that could be fully funded by TIF backing. That project failed in 2001 to get the two-thirds voter approval, despite getting a \$1.5 million federal grant to help pay for the work.

The Route 28/Main Street intersection within the old Depot could be another benefactor from having a TIF designation, he said.

"As a selectman, I don't hide from the concept that I'm pursuing a strategy by which — where appropriate — we should be able to take on debt for worthy projects and replace infrastructure," he said. "And at same time, it alleviates any burden on taxpayers. We should be doing that as well."

One concern, even among supporters, has been whether Salem could end up overtaxing businesses and developments with a series of fees already in place.

Salem already requires developers to pay an impact fee to cover increased demands on public safety, 57 cents per square foot. A road impact fee for developments along Route 28 is up to \$3 per square foot.

"Some people would argue, 'Hey, that's enough. We don't need to do more. We don't want to discourage people from doing business here,'" Town Planner Ross Moldoff said.

But Moldoff said many large businesses come to town offering to make substantial improvements to their surrounding area.

Developers for a Lowe's store now being considered along the Methuen town line are promising \$2 million in road improvements, while still paying \$51,000 in impact fees, Moldoff said.

"Some people would say in a down economy, be realistic," he said. "Others say, 'Hey, people want to be here.' I could see a concern among some here in the community to make sure you don't go too far in terms of what's reasonable and rational. Where TIF fits into that I have no idea."

8/12/08 Tribune.

# Salem selectmen OK farm purchase

BY JAMES A. KIMBLE  
STAFF WRITER

SALEM — An influx of land-use taxes could grow enough to cover the cost of buying Hawkins Farm, town officials said last night.

Selectmen approved, 4-1, the purchase of the former 15-acre farm for \$950,000, marking one of the biggest open land buys in years.

Planning Director Ross Moldoff provided more details on how the land would be paid for before the selectmen approved the deal. The Conservation Commission will pay \$750,000 to landowner Ed Hawkins of Chester at the closing.

The commission would then have three years to pay off the remaining \$200,000. That money would come from Salem's land conservation fund.

Moldoff said that in the last four years, developers have been pouring thousands of dollars into the fund by paying land-use-change taxes.

"The feeling is the fund may be replenished over three years," Moldoff said.

Such taxes are paid when property is taken out of "current use" status, a state easement that encourages conservation in exchange for a lower tax assessment.

Since 2004, approximately \$552,000 has been paid into the land conservation fund, Moldoff said.

The largest single payer during that period was the developers of Braemoor Woods, a large-scale

condominium and housing complex on the former Lord property off Veterans Parkway. They paid \$89,000 in 2007 and \$267,000 in 2006. The fund took in \$143,000 in 2005 and \$53,000 in 2004.

If the fund doesn't provide the remaining \$200,000, the commission has agreed to subdivide a single-family home on the property and give it to Hawkins.

Selectman Pat Hargreaves, the lone dissenter, said he was uncomfortable with waiting so long to pay off the balance.

"I don't like the idea of owing someone \$200,000," he said. "If we're so confident we're getting money from the change-in-use fee, why not pay him now? To me, it just doesn't seem right."

At first, board members expressed unease at taking on the house along with the land.

Moldoff explained that Hawkins only wanted to sell the land with the home, not separately.

Selectmen Chairman Elizabeth Roth stressed that taxpayers wouldn't be held liable for the balance of the purchase if the fund is not replenished.

Conservation Commission members said the farm is both a rare and prized piece of land. The farm largely grew corn and sits along the Spicket River and flood plain. It's next to five acres of town-owned conservation land and other private properties with conservation easements.

Town officials said they may lease part of the property to a local farmer, and also could open up a piece of the land to community gardens.

# Town set to buy Hawkins farmland

By JAMES A. KIMBLE  
STAFF WRITER

**SALEM** — The town is buying a 15-acre farm for conservation land, making it one of the largest purchases of open space in more than a decade.

Selectmen are expected to sign off on the \$950,000 purchase of Hawkins Farm on Monday.

The Conservation Commission voted 6-0 Wednesday to use approximately \$850,000 from a land acquisition account for the purchase and signed a purchase-and-sales agreement with landowner Ed Hawkins of Chester.

"At best, there's five pieces of property like that in town," said Conservation Commission Chairman Bill Carter.

It's a hallmark of the era when Salem's landscape was largely rural, full of dairy and other working farms, which now have been replaced with retail development and an influx of housing.

Hawkins Farm is at 86 Town Farm Road, just west of Captain Pond and the Massachusetts border.

The purchase comes nearly a year and half after a deal to buy the 86-acre Duston Farm fell apart.

In the mid-1980s, rows upon rows of corn spread across Hawkins Farm, Carter said. People would stop to buy fresh corn at a stand on the property.

With town ownership of the property, the spirit of farming may live on.

Conservation Commission members would like to lease part of the property to a local farmer. Another section of land may be opened to community gardens, where people could grow their own vegetables on 20-by-20-foot lots, ac-

Please see **FARM**, Page 6

## FARM: Salem buying conservation land

Continued from Page 1

cording to Carter.

"With the cost of food these days, if you had 10 or 12 people who wanted to do it, it's possible," he said.

Salem began talking to Hawkins about two months ago when he approached the town about buying the land.

Planning Director Ross Moldoff said the Hawkins Farm about an additional 5 acres of conservation land Salem bought in 1997.

"It borders the Spicket River and includes some flood plain. It's all farmland and the farmland is regrowing," Moldoff said. "Environmentally, it's a very sensitive site."

The money in the land acquisition fund comes from two primary sources: Salem had \$200,000 set aside years ago for a land buy that never happened. And over the years, the town has accumu-

### PREVIOUS CONSERVATION PURCHASES

- 1994, Lord family, Veterans Memorial Parkway, 4.8 acres, \$7,200
- 1996, St. Joseph Church, Zen Hill Road, 5 acres, \$180,000
- 1997, Granite State Baptist Church, Budon Avenue, 23 acres, \$45,000
- 1997, Murray, Town Farm Road, about 7 acres, \$5,000

lated money from people paying an added tax for converting their land from a conservation status known as current use to developable land, according to Moldoff. The fund has rarely been tapped. One of the last large purchases came in 1996, when the town bought about 5 acres from St. Joseph Church for \$180,000.

Salem bought a much larger

parcel, 23 acres, from Granite State Baptist Church in 1997 for \$45,000, but the property was largely wetlands, according to Moldoff and property records.

Carter said he is pleased the land won't be sold for development, which could have resulted in seven or eight homes being built on the property. "As a commission, we're saying we want to protect this land and it's really crucial to do this, especially along the Spicket River," he said.

As part of the agreement, Salem is paying the bulk of the purchase price to Hawkins and must provide the remaining money through a payment plan.

"That money could be requested at Town Meeting or it could be paid for through the same fund, according to Moldoff. Another alternative would be to subdivide the home on the property and sell it, he said.

7/17/08 T-bune

► Salem

# CVS eyes three new locations

BY JAMES A. KIMBLE  
STAFF WRITER

SALEM — CVS is looking to build three new stores here, in a town that has no shortage of places to fill a prescription.

"We have 10 pharmacies in town already, which is pretty incredible," Town Planner Ross Moldoff said.

CVS already has two locations in Salem, one on South Broadway and one in the Mall at Rockingham Park.

The three separate efforts to build new stores are being championed by different developers and are in various stages of planning, Moldoff said.

Planning Board members at-

ready began considering plans for one possible location at the old Coca-Cola bottling plant along Route 28. It would be an anchor for a potential seven-store complex that also may include a coffee shop and restaurant, Moldoff said.

Another proposal would replace the CVS on South Broadway, using three house lots next door. That plan is slated to go before the Planning Board next week, Moldoff said.

A third proposal is being considered for a retail lot in North Salem, along Route 28 near the Windham town line, Moldoff said. The developer for that project has had only initial discussions with Moldoff.

Please see CVS, B3B

■ Continued from Page 1

tax. The town also has seen an influx of hundreds of units in senior housing in recent years.

But the proliferation of pharmacy chains like CVS and Walgreens is not unique to Salem.

New Walgreens stores have recently been built in Derry, Hampstead and Londonderry. Derry recently got a second Rite Aid, less than a mile away from another one on Crystal Avenue.

CVS has 29 stores in New Hampshire. It opened two new stores in Hooksett and Manchester between 2006 and 2007, according to the company.

Michael DeAngelis, a spokesman for CVS, refused to comment on the three new stores possibly coming to Salem.

He said the company doesn't confirm or speak about new locations unless there is a signed lease or purchase agreement in place.

and no plans have been submitted to Town Hall, he said.

Selectman Michael Lyons said it comes as little surprise that Salem is attracting multiple store locations, given the town's daily traffic counts and population density.

"It's something I've noticed outside of Salem as well," said Lyons, the selectman's representative to the Planning Board. "The fact that three are popping up in town speaks to our growth. It's a result of our population density, demographics and traffic counts."

Salem attracts thousands of shoppers, drawn in part from those who frequent the Mall at Rockingham Park and a grid of big-box retailers along Route 28. A lot of those shoppers come over the border from Massachusetts, drawn by the state's lack of a sales



7/14/08

# Building is gone, but spire and windows are preserved

BY REBECCA CORREA  
STAFF WRITER



**BEFORE:** The Baptist Church on Main Street was most recently a restaurant.

Courtesy photo

**SALEM** — The newest addition to the town's historical museum is one of the tallest artifacts in town.

The 6-foot spire that stood atop the Baptist Church on Main Street for a century is now preserved inside the town's museum. The spire, along with two stained glass windows and several pictures that hung in the church, were removed from the church just before it was demolished last month, according to Beverly Glynn, chairwoman of the Historic

District Commission.

Officials at the Salem Co-Operative Bank, the new owner of the land, offered the town whatever artifacts it wanted before the former church building was destroyed.

"What we really wanted was the spire; it was magnificent," Glynn said. "At the bottom of the spire was a round ball made out of copper, (a member) is taking it home, having it cleaned, and I know when he gets through, it will shine the way it used to."

Salem Co-Operative Bank purchased the one-third acre on Main Street at a

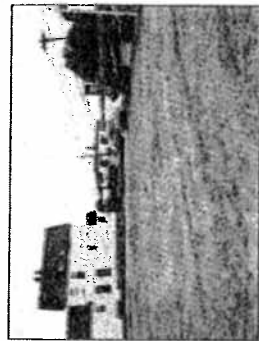
foreclosure auction in February, according to bank President Ann Lally.

The property, including the church, which was built in 1868, was assessed at \$892,000 and was purchased by Salem Co-Operative for \$580,000.

Lally said the bank bought it with the intention of demolishing the church.

"The building was in real disrepair," she said. "A lot of the wood was rotted in the building; it wasn't up to code. It was a shame (to demolish it), but it needed a lot of work."

Please see **CHURCH**, Page 8



JARROD THOMPSON/Staff photo

**AFTER:** There is now an empty lot where the church stood for almost 140 years.

■ *Continued from Page 1.*

She said the building, which was most recently Samantha's Restaurant, was used for Fire Department training before it was knocked down.

The property is adjacent to the South Broadway bank, but there are no immediate plans for it, according to Lally.

"At some point, we will have plans for it, but nothing for public disclosure yet," she said.

Over the years, the church was been used as an office building, insurance agency, antique shop and most recently a restaurant.

Because the church was in a commercial district, not a historic district, the new owners didn't need permission from town planners to knock it down.

The building hadn't been used as a church for several decades. In fact, the last time it was used as a church, officials had to meet to give the group permission.

Planning Director Ross Moldoff said he recalls a religious group that wanted to use part of the

church in the 1980s, but they needed to get a variance because they weren't a business and the property is in a commercial district.

Aside from that, not many people can remember the last time the church was used regularly for religious services.

Glynn has lived in town for about 40 years and said she doesn't recall church services being held there during that time.

"I can remember it when it was an antique place," she said. "I actually didn't pay too much attention to it until it became a restaurant which we frequented."

Glynn said most of the original items, including the old pews, had been removed years ago. But the steeple — which was replaced in 1906 — was a piece of history she wanted the town to keep.

"It's hard done and there is a design we couldn't see up there with lovely roses on it," she said.

"Plus, in the old history books of Salem, there were a lot of white church steeples at one time, but no more."

7/3/08 Observer

# No pets allowed

## Abutters don't want animal shelter in their neighborhood

BY DERRICK PERKINS

perkins.derrick@comcast.net

Residents of Brady Avenue again challenged a plan by the Salem Animal Rescue League to construct a new animal shelter in their neighborhood.

Raising concerns over traffic, noise, animal waste and odor, potential neighbors of the 15,000-square-foot shelter lined up at the Tuesday, June 24, Planning Board meeting to express their reservations about a project that is still in the conceptual phase.

Shelter architect Steve Jensen presented figures comparing the proposed building to other large structures in the area in a defense against criticisms over the proposed size and layout of the shelter. Terry Perrino, of 70 Brady Ave., remained unconvinced and challenged Jensen's figures while voicing concerns that the presence of the shelter would lower the value of his property.

"I'm still opposed," he told the board. "I still don't think

***"People that know us appreciate the work that we do. I hope we're able to address all the concerns to our abutters. SARL has always been a good neighbor."***

— Valorie Hayes, director of marketing and media relations for SARL

they should have an animal rescue league on Brady."

Jensen, who has designed shelters across the country, including one in Methuen, Mass., and another in Brockton, Mass., attempted to address the issues previously raised by neighbors and abutters at the April 21 board meeting, but failed to quell concerns from residents.

Changes to the original concept made by Jensen since the April meeting included adding a row of evergreens or shrubs along the property lines, adding fence to the dog play area and using a landscape finish for the proposed retaining walls for aesthetic purposes.

According to Jensen, more

work needed to be done.

"We're going to have to rescale (the shelter)," he said. "We'll be in front of the board again."

David Fredrickson, of 16 Brady Ave., called for a study of the impact of new traffic and criticized SARL for not yet applying for a permit for their proposed septic system and to build a driveway on a state road.

"I'm against this. It doesn't fit," he said. "We've been a quiet neighborhood and we haven't asked much from the town. This is something the town could do for us, to preserve the tranquility that we now possess."

SARL has been working with the town for more than

six months to locate a site on which to build a new shelter, according planning director Ross Moldoff. The location on Brady Avenue was received from a benefactor and is one of several sites explored by the animal rescue league.

According to Valorie Hayes, director of marketing and media relations for SARL, the organization is currently operating out of three modular shelters. Five or six years ago, SARL had been informed that the land they operated on would be flooded and reclaimed for wetland use by the state and town, she said. At that point, the 15-year-old organization began searching for a new location.

Hayes called the previous meeting before the board "amicable."

"Some of the neighbors expressed concerns. Everything was very amicable. People that know us appreciate the work that we do," she said. "I hope we're able to address all the concerns to our abutters. SARL has always been a good neighbor."

# SHELTER: Finances, neighborhood complaints obstacles to overcome before move

■ Continued from Page 3

goods and services.

SARL is in informal talks with the Planning Board about moving to the 28-acre farm on Brady Avenue.

"The formal review process has not started yet," Town Planner Ross Moldoff said. "They've come to the Planning Board for conceptual discussions to flush out some of the issues in advance before they

do the engineering and spend money."

The second meeting was this week, and they will meet again next month.

Moldoff said the shelter is controversial because some of the neighbors are opposed.

"They don't want an animal shelter near their property," he said. "They feel the shelter will devalue their property."

And there have been questions

about noise and odors. "So we've got a bit of a balancing act," he said to make sure the shelter doesn't change the established character of the area.

Moldoff said the area is zoned a rural district and kennels are allowed, provided the property encompasses at least two acres. The farm, which SARL now owns thanks to a donation, has more than 20 acres, but the conceptual plans indicate the shelter will be

built on three-quarters of an acre near the road. Moldoff said that could pose a problem, although it's premature to say yet.

"It's a commercial use," he said. "Nobody would say it's residential. You have people coming and going, and it's not an office building. It's animals. How are they going to dispose of the waste?"

Moldoff said the shelter answered some of those questions. One of the abutters, Terry Perri-

no of 70 Brady Ave., said he doesn't want the shelter at the Brady Avenue site.

"They're a wonderful organization," he said. "I've donated to them. But you see how nice this is," he said, gesturing at his lawn and garden. "This is mine. I don't need a dog kennel next to it."

Ferrino's yard abuts a golf driving range and sits across the street from a golf course and Turner's Dairy. Although these busi-

nesses also are commercial, he said the shelter is different because it would be new. He knew it

Hayes said SARL is taking dairy, the golf course and the driving range were next to him before he bought his property, he said. Hayes said SARL is taking residents' objections to heart and wants to be a good neighbor.

"We're totally willing to work around any of the plans as long as we help the neighbors," she said. "We are part of the community, too."

► Salem, N.H.

6/25/08 Tribune

## Animal shelter plans for new facility

### Group faces financial, neighborhood challenges in early stages

BY MARGO SULLIVAN  
STAFF WRITER

SALEM — The Salem, N.H., Animal Rescue League could move to a farm on Brady Avenue within one or two years, provided everything goes its way, according to Valerie Hayes, who is in charge of communications for the shelter.

The relocation would mean going to high and dry ground, and leaving behind the flood-prone site, which the 17-year-old organization shares with the town dog pound on SARL Way behind Route 28.

But planning for the new facility is still in the very early stages, and hurdles remain, including raising the money to pay for the construction and overcoming neighborhood opposition. So far, the shelter has raised \$500,000, including pledges, but needs \$1.5 million to complete the first phase, shelter Development Director Ray Denis said. The complex will require two construction phases and cost \$3 million, he said.

As a result, the same week the Planning

#### HOW TO HELP

The Shelter and Adoption Center Capital Giving Campaign has opportunities to name gifts after loved ones for as little as \$500 for a cat crate up to \$150,000 for a wing of the Dog Adoption Center, Hayes said. Call the development office at 893-3117 or e-mail [SARLdevelopment@aol.com](mailto:SARLdevelopment@aol.com) for more information.

The shelter is at 4 SARL Drive in Salem, N.H. The web site is [www.sarl-nh.org](http://www.sarl-nh.org), and the telephone number is 893-2766.

Board was looking at ideas for the Brady Avenue proposal, the shelter was making do on SARL Way by opening another refurbished trailer. It will be used as a place where dogs in need of adoption can meet their prospective owners.

Bernard's Place, as the refurbished trailer is called, was officially put into service Thursday. Named in memory of a dog named Bernard, who was adopted from the

shelter, the new modular unit brings the number of trailers on the site to three. One trailer is called Kitty City, where sheltered cats and kittens stay, and the third is a medical trailer, where veterinary operations are performed.

Although the trailers are temporary until the shelter can relocate to the new complex, there was a pressing space need, Hayes said. The shelter honors the town's standing request that the public not enter the town-owned kennel, due to potential liability issues.

But that's meant people had to stand outside — sometimes in inclement weather — to look at dogs available for adoption. The new trailer provides an indoor space, which also can be used for dog training and other community-oriented meetings. It's being named after a dog whose owners made a major contribution to retrofit the trailer, Hayes said. Several businesses, including The Home Depot and Raytheon, contributed

Please see SHELTER, Page 12

# Coke plant may be demolished

## Developers turn to plan to build new plaza

BY JIM DEVINE

[jameswdevine@mac.com](mailto:jameswdevine@mac.com)

**T**he former Coca-Cola bottling plant could come down in new plans to redevelop the historic South Broadway property.

More than two years after Joe Scott and Dennis Metayer purchased the property for \$3 million with plans to refurbish it and make it a retail outlet plaza, MetScott, their company, has gone back to plans to demolish the plant and build three buildings totaling 37,000 square feet.

The Planning Board reviewed the plans favorably earlier this month with primary concerns focused on traffic, according to Planning Director Ross Moldoff.

The plaza would make room for four retail locations, a restaurant, a coffee shop and a 13,000-square-foot pharmacy, according to submitted plans.

"The board was receptive to it, but they still have a long way to go through the planning process," said Moldoff.

Current plans include

one main driveway, which would add another set of lights less than a half mile away from the regularly backed-up Depot intersection of Main Street and South Broadway.

While the Planning Board has had concerns of additional traffic since the plans were introduced two years ago, Moldoff said changing the plans from having two driveways to one would focus discussion on turning lanes and traffic capacity.

"On any given Friday afternoon, it'll back up (on South Broadway) all the way down to the post office, which is about a mile," Moldoff said.

The developers are expected to continue working with the town's traffic consultant to push the development in a direction that'll handle new traffic while improving the current situation as a whole, Moldoff said.

"We're dealing with Lowe's on the other end of Route 28 with the same issues," he said. "It's a matter of finding a way to handle traffic better than it was before."

# Board approves changing apartment project to condos

By JAMES A. KIMBLE  
STAFF WRITER

**SALEM** — A senior housing project first expected to bring 93 apartments to town will now be built as luxury condominiums.

It's been downsized to 88 units, which will have larger rooms, and the building is expected to be a story taller than first planned.

At its meeting Tuesday night, the Planning Board approved changes to the five-story building, a leg of the Braemore Woods

complex.

When the two buildings were approved about four years ago, planners signed off on two 55-foot-tall buildings with 92 apartments.

But Rick Bedard, who bought the property in 2006, has spent months seeking to convert the property so people could buy instead of rent. Part of that conversion meant getting another 5 feet in height. The added height will allow for the building to be five stories instead of four. But don't expect to spot it anytime soon. It's be-

hind the wooded tree line of the old Lord property along Veterans Parkway, opposite the Salem police station.

"Adding that story was so painstaking, even though it was in a secluded area," Bedard said.

"They kept telling us they didn't want to approve the height, but we have a great project. It's going to be the crown jewel of Salem."

Bedard said amenities around his buildings will include two miles of walking trails and a clubhouse. He said he should have no

problem filling the condos, despite a floundering real estate market.

His company, Bedfour LLC, has been compiling a nonbinding sales list to fill the two buildings. Sellers have to be 55 or older to live on the property.

Single-bedroom condos are expected to sell for about \$270,000 and up. Two-bedroom condos will be in the low to high \$300,000 range.

Planning Board Chairman James Keller said he saw the change in height as a minor issue. "But the board is very con-

cerned about height, so we had a fair amount of discussion about it," Keller said.

Steve Lewis of Atkinson received approval for a 55-foot building in 2004. Planning Director Ross Moldoff. The town has since capped new building height at 35 feet.

"We changed the regulations so that we wouldn't get these monstrous buildings anymore," Moldoff said.

Keller said the change in height was minimally different from what was initially proposed. He said the

building will not be visible from the street and the latest design has a number of improvements to its architecture.

"The market conditions changed since it was first approved, so they figured they needed to switch from the apartment orientation to condos," Keller said.

Bedard bought the project in 2006. Lewis still owns the majority of the Braemore complex, but Be-

dard has the option on at least two neighboring parcels of land within the property.



# Condo OK likely, but affordable units are still uncertain

By GORDON FRASER  
STAFF WRITER

SALEM — As plans for a major housing development likely move forward tomorrow, the 12 units that were supposed to be set aside for low-income seniors face more obstacles than ever in getting built.

The long-delayed Braemoor Woods mixed housing development will be before the Planning Board tomorrow. It was first proposed three years ago and is slated to include senior housing, townhouses and high-end condominiums.

Eighty-eight proposed high-end condominiums still have to be approved at the Veterans Memorial Parkway site, although plans for them already have been reviewed by the board, according to Steven Lewis, part owner of the project.

"I think it will be relatively quick and easy, but every time I say that it will, it takes two hours," Planning Director Ross Moldoff said of the condominium approval.

But, regardless of what happens to the 88 proposed condos, another key feature of the Braemoor Woods plan is in jeopardy.

Even though land for 12 affordable, over-55 housing units was donated to the Salem Housing Authority, money from the state hasn't come down to build them.

"We applied for tax credits through New Hampshire Housing (Finance Authority) and we were not successful in this last round," said Diane Kierstead, who runs the Salem Housing Authority.

"The board is looking into, possibly, other options or alternatives over there."

But just what those alternatives might be, or how soon they could be realized, isn't clear, Kierstead said.

The Salem Housing Authority will likely apply for tax credits in the second round of awards this year, but only about \$1 million in credits is available, according to Housing Finance Authority spokeswoman Jane Law.

Nearly \$1.7 million was given away in the first round this year, according to the state agency's

Web site.

The Salem affordable housing project already has some funding — it got a \$500,000 grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston last year — but it needs tax credits to move forward, Kierstead said.

The \$208,000 in tax credits Salem applied for could be used to encourage more than \$1.5 million in private funding from investors, who would benefit from 10 years of tax write-offs, Law said.

But even if the Salem Housing Authority does manage to get its tax credits this year — which Law said is certainly possible — the affordable housing might not do as much good as Kierstead would like.

That's because the local housing authority has two kinds of rental units: public housing and tax credit housing.

Public housing rents are adjusted based on a renter's income, and a one-bedroom apartment can go for \$200 or \$300 a month, Kierstead said.

The tax credit housing — like the 12 proposed units at Braemoor — are much more expensive. Rent for a one-bedroom there would typically go for \$700 a month, only slightly lower than the market rate.

The public housing program has a waiting list 230 people deep, Kierstead said. The tax credit housing program, which is smaller, only has about 20 people on it.

"Not all the people on the public housing list can meet (the tax credit) rents," she said.

Despite that, Kierstead thinks the 12 affordable units at Braemoor Woods eventually will be built — it's just a matter of when and how.

"I don't think it's a matter of whether it's going to get scrapped altogether," she said.

And waiting a long time is something the other Braemoor Woods developers, like Lewis, have gotten used to.

"Everyone thought all these units were going to be there tomorrow," Lewis said. "(But) our phased approach wouldn't let us build it out all in one year anyway."

# Judge upholds Salem Planning Board's ruling

By GORDON FRASER  
STAFF WRITER

**SALEM** — A Superior Court decision handed down last week will likely cut off a convenient back entrance for several businesses on Garabedian Drive.

"It's basically a shortcut to (Route) 28," said Cassie Blenvue, the owner of Celebrity Cheer at 16 Garabedian Drive. "I definitely

think that some of our customers, certain customers, use it and find it convenient."

In a ruling dated May 8 but released by the town on May 13, Superior Court Judge John Lewis sided with the Salem Planning Board. The board had given the go-ahead for a developer to effectively cut off a narrow dirt road that led from Route 28 to Garabedian Drive.

Salem Rockingham LLC, a development company, is looking to build a Lay-Z-Boy store at 398-412 S. Broadway, near Circuit City. The proposed 24,600-square-foot retail building was approved last August, and would include a few smaller stores.

Salem Rockingham developer Ned Gordon yesterday declined to comment through a representative of his business, saying he was

waiting "until after all appeal periods have lapsed."

John Wolters and Steven Lospennato, who own the 16 Garabedian Drive building where Celebrity Cheer is housed, had sued to keep access to the dirt road. The pair claimed they had control of the narrow road because of a deed dated Dec. 2, 1874.

But the width of the road, and its location, might have changed

since the time of the deed, the judge said.

Lewis ruled against Wolters and Lospennato largely because they "failed to meet their burden to show that the Planning Board unlawfully or unreasonably ... approved the (Salem Rockingham's) plan."

Wolters and Lospennato could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Salem Planning Director Ross Moldoff said the two men had ex-

pressed a need to keep the dirt road open because it gives them access to their property in case of a flood. In addition to Celebrity Cheer, a cheerleading studio, the building contains two other businesses.

"They said when it floods, as in the May 2006 floods, they couldn't get to their property," Moldoff said. "The only way they could get to their property was through this back ... travel-way."

5/20/88 *rebut*

# Salem couple's plan for 50-animal kennel put on hold

By GORDON FRASER  
STAFF WRITER

SALEM — A couple trying to build a kennel in the neighborhood of Galway Lane are holding off for now, waiting to get state approval before bringing their controversial plan before the town again.

"They're waiting to get their state septic approval," said Plan-

ning Director Ross Moldoff.

Thomas and Donna Richard bought a house at 3 Galway Lane last year and have been trying to build a 50-animal kennel there.

But neighbors in the area have protested, saying the kennel would increase traffic, endanger children and introduce noise pollution to the quiet cul-de-sac.

For his part, Thomas Richard

has said he would take steps to accommodate neighbors' concerns. He would keep animals in enclosed areas and only let them out in shifts, he said. He reduced the number of animals proposed from 75 to 50, as well.

Several neighbors have also raised concerns that animal waste could pollute well water, although Richard says he has licensed experts ready to testify

that is not the case.

The Richards were slated to appear at the May 13 Planning Board meeting, but canceled. Moldoff said it isn't clear if they'll have state approval in hand by May 27, the date of the next regular Planning Board meeting.

— ADAM IN PRICE

5/16/08 TRIBUNE

# Planners weigh, reject new rule on site visits

By GORDON FRASER  
STAFF WRITER

SALEM — Landowners who want approval for a development but don't want crowds of people traipsing across their land during the application process, might just get their wish.

That's because the town's Planning Board Tuesday rejected a strict new rule that would have given the board the right to reject applications from uncooperative landowners.

In a review of the Planning Board's bylaws, board member Linda Harvey had recommended language that would have given the panel authority to reject an application if a landowner refused to let members of the public tag along during a site visit.

The Planning Board's job is to review applications for new building projects, and the board sometimes conducts site visits to get a better sense of the application.

Because state law requires the Planning Board to conduct all its business in public, the site walks must be open to the public. But property owners are technically allowed to refuse anyone the right to visit their property.

And if the public can't go, neither can the Planning Board, according to Planning Director Ross Moldoff.

But panel members were reluctant about the idea of rejecting an application outright simply because a landowner refused to let members of the public onto a property.

"I am very nervous about the public going on someone's property," board member Ron Belanger said. "When you have a meeting on somebody's property, the liability is enormous."

Selectman Michael Lyons, who serves as a representative to the Planning Board, shared that reluctance.

"I'm kind of uneasy about this

one — access to the site walk by the non-board public," he said.

The Planning Board Tuesday cut Harvey's language, which would have explicitly permitted the Planning Board to reject an application if the public is not invited to a site walk.

But Harvey stuck by her language.

"Basically, (a site walk is) a scheduled meeting, and meetings are open to the public," she said.

The whole question might be moot, anyway, according to Moldoff.

"We (hold site walks) very, very rarely. The Planning Board typically asks for me to go out to the site and tell them," Moldoff said.

The planning director said the board only goes on one or two site visits a year, at most.

Beyond that, it would be illegal for the board to go on a site visit if the public wasn't invited, Moldoff said. Although, he said, it's certainly possible to imagine a landowner trying to deny members of the general property access to his property.

"(I) can envision a situation where a landowner says, 'No, this neighbor has been nasty to me and I don't want them to go on the site walk,'" Moldoff said.

In that case, Moldoff said, the Planning Board wouldn't be able to hold the meeting.

Under current rules, the board would then have to decide whether to reject the application or to conduct its fact-finding in some other way.

Lawyers from the New Hampshire Local Government Center refused to comment on the subject of site visits, citing a rule that forbids them from giving legal advice to the general public.

A representative from the state Office of Energy and Planning, which advises local planning boards, could not be reached yesterday.



## COCA-COLA: Plant could be destroyed to make room for restaurants, stores

■ Continued from Page 1

the property: about 30 feet away from the road. To accommodate the large amount of traffic expected, developers would have to build two narrow roads on either side of the building, project engineer Marc Gross said.

The new plan calls for a single road to the property with a stoplight directing traffic.

"The new plan is certainly an improvement," said board Chairman Jim Keller.

But the project still has some town officials worried about traffic because it sits along one of the most congested roads in Salem.

The Depot Train Station area, a four-way intersection between Route 28 and Route 97, is just north of the Coca-Cola plant. Traffic at that intersection is frequently backed up, and it has been at the center of the town's road reconstruction plans for several years.

The new development is expected to attract up to 606 additional vehicles over the course of an hour on some Saturdays.

"When I see 606 (estimated Saturday) trips in a given hour anywhere near the Depot, it kind of gives me a Roloids moment," Keller said.

Beyond that, doubts linger among some board members about whether the Coca-Cola plant should be torn down.

"I really, really hate to see the town losing some of the things that make the town unique from a historical perspective," said board member Linda Harvey.

Selectman Michael Lyons, who is a representative to the Planning Board, said much will depend on a meeting about Depot area fixes in June.

Lyons wants to see any development at the Coke plant coordinated with changes to the Depot intersection.

In the meantime, though, the town's own traffic consultant said he is extremely happy with the plan Scott and Metara have proposed.

"This is the kind of access configuration that we've all been looking for," consultant Steve Pernaw said.

# bune

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## 8. INSIDE TODAY

► **Salem:** Coca-Cola bottling facility

# Owners want plant destroyed

## Restaurant, coffee shop, stores planned to replace building

BY GORDON FRASER  
STAFF WRITER

SALEM — After two years of planning how to preserve it, the owners of a century-old Coca-Cola bottling plant on South Broadway want to tear it down.

Dennis Metara and Joseph Scott bought the plant and the 6.8 acres it sits on three years ago. Since then, they have been to several meetings with the Planning Board trying to obtain approval for a plan to redevelop the property.

"We've done everything that we've been asked, over and over," said a visibly frustrated Scott last night, just after meeting with the board for what he said was the

seventh time.

Scott said he and Metara have spent \$100,000 on a plan to save the plant, a plan that had been scrapped to satisfy the board's concerns about traffic.

But the latest proposal — to replace the plant with three, smaller buildings housing a pharmacy, coffee shop, restaurant and retail shops — received a generally positive response from town planners last night.

"I love this project," said board member Gene Bryant. "And I don't care if the Coke plant goes away, either."

The 60,000-square-foot Coca-Cola plant sits in an awkward spot on

Please see **COCA-COLA**, Page 6



The Planning Board meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 29, is to specifically address R. J. O'Connell & Associates' submitted plans for the shopping center, Moldoff said.

"They haven't submitted their full set of plans, but this has been in the works for some time," Moldoff said. "The Planning Board has really pushed them to come up with a plan that would address the added traffic to the area."

Since the parking lot of the proposed site rests almost entirely in Methuen, Mass., the developers have had to seek planning approval from the other town, Moldoff said.

Added pedestrian accommodations, turning lanes and changes to the location of plaza entrances and exits are planned to increase space between traffic lights in the area and allow increased flow of traffic, according to proposal documents submitted to the planning office.

As part of the traffic impact requirements to the project, Moldoff said the developers have submitted an application that would include \$2 million of traffic improvements to the area.

"They're going to widen the road, relocate a traffic signal and update them for synchronization," he said.

# Car talks

## Traffic plan for Lowe's plaza to be debated

BY JIM DEVINE

[jameswdevine@mac.com](mailto:jameswdevine@mac.com)

Planners will meet next week to review traffic impact plans for a new Lowe's location at the state line of Route 28.

The Stateline Shopping Center straddling the Salem-Methuen, Mass., border, is presenting a plan for a 200,000-square-foot building to house the large-scale home improvement store at the already busy point along Route 28.

"That's a pretty big project by any definition in Salem," Town Planning Director Ross Moldoff said, citing that only a handful of locations would be larger in town.

The plaza location, home to AAMCO and Staples, is located just south of the often gridlocked intersection of Lawrence Road and Hampshire Street.

4/24/08 Observer

## Letters to the editor

4/16/08 Tribune

### Salem zoning board's performance is lacking

#### To the editor:

I am writing to express my disappointment, and astonishment, at the recent action of the Salem Zoning Board of Adjustment in the matter of the proposed kennel to be located in a residence on Galway Lane.

The Salem Planning Board, after more than sufficient inquiry and deliberation, had determined that this application represented the establishment of a retail service business and was not allowed in the rural zone. Additionally, the proposed reconfiguration of the housing unit involved was completely inappropriate for a densely populated, dead end, residential street such as Galway Lane.

The negative impacts on the abutters were clear and substantial.

The rural zone allows kennels in the context of agricultural use, as in animal husbandry. No one with an understanding of land use (with the now obvious exception of the ZBA)

would interpret the temporary housing of other people's pets, in great quantity, in a residence, occupying more than 75 percent of this two-family dwelling, to be anything other than a retail commercial enterprise.

The unwarranted action of the ZBA, in hearing this application and their mistaken decision, is another demonstration of that body's disregard for the fundamentals of Salem's zoning ordinances. One need only examine some of the more egregious examples, in recent actions of the ZBA, to wonder whether there is, in fact, any real zoning in Salem.

Two cases come to mind. Without benefit of traffic studies or professional advice, the ZBA granted a request by the Lowe's site applicant to reduce required parking by 300 spaces from around 900 to 600, and then with contradictory logic, allowed Canobie Lake Park to add 300

parking spaces in a residential zone. In so many of their inexplicable decisions, the ZBA members will comment that, of course, the Planning Board will see the final plan and make it work.

It is apparent that any applicant, or their attorney, if capable of writing five coherent paragraphs (one for each of the five adjustment criteria) is summarily approved, without examination or challenge. There is a dramatic need for a new attitude, and some discipline, in the deliberations of the Salem Board of Adjustment. It is time for a much needed public discussion on the performance of the ZBA.

I speak for myself, and do not presume to express or represent the opinions of the other members of the Salem Planning Board.

**GENE BRYANT**  
Vice chairman  
Planning Board  
Salem, N.H.

# ZBA: Kennel can be built in Salem

4/3/08

## Neighbors will fight the 50-animal facility despite board's approval

BY GORDON FRASER  
STAFF WRITER

*“Obviously, it’s frustrating. This isn’t a hobby or anything. This is our livelihood.”*

Property owner Thomas Richard

SALEM — A local man hoping to build a kennel got one step closer to his goal Tuesday night, despite stiff opposition from neighbors and some town officials.

Thomas Richard, who bought the house at 3 Galway Lane last year, has been trying to receive approval to build a kennel on the property. But Richard and his wife, Donna, have faced opposition from others who live on the quiet dead-end street.

“Obviously, it’s frustrating,” Richard said yesterday of the resistance to his plan. “This isn’t a hobby or anything. This is our livelihood.”

On Tuesday, the Zoning Board of Adjustment unanimously overturned a Feb. 26 Planning Board decision, ruling that current regulations would allow Richard to build a 50-animal kennel on his

year after searching for a building where zoning allowed kennels, he said.

“I saw a property in the business zone and I called them up, and he said, ‘No, you can’t (build a kennel here),’ that it has to be in the rural zone,” Richard said.

The 3 Galway Lane house and the 2-acre property are zoned rural, and that’s why Richard said he bought it. Richard would not say how much he has invested in his plan to build a kennel.

But Smith, as well as other neighbors, have argued that their neighborhood isn’t really rural at all, despite its zoning.

“We’re a de facto residential area ... even though we are technically rural,” he said. “While something may be legal, it doesn’t mean it makes sense, and a business on this street doesn’t make sense.”

Continued from Page 1

for most of the day, but would be allowed out in the morning and in the afternoon.

While Richard originally planned for 70 animals, he has reduced the planned maximum capacity to 50 animals. He expects no more than 45 dogs and cats would be boarded at any one time.

But Smith and others worry the kennel might bring dangerous animals to the area, might pollute well water and might bring more traffic to the short road, which ends in a cul-de-sac.

Richard said studies by licensed experts show the kennel will not bring significantly more traffic or pollute groundwater. He also says the animals — both dogs and cats — will be contained.

Richard bought the house last

Please see KENNEL, Page 4

## KENNEL: Approved by ZBA



## Commercial vacancy rates up Developers continue to put up buildings

By Gordon Fraser  
Staff writer

SALEM — At 11 Keewaydin Drive stands the shell of a large office building that has remained unfinished for more than a year.

In some ways, it's the symbol of a trend worrying many town planners, economic forecasters and real estate experts. Commercial vacancy rates are rising, and "for lease" signs litter the town's commercial districts, but developers are still putting up office buildings at breakneck speed.

Brooks Properties, which owns the unfinished building at 11 Keewaydin, isn't going to complete the structure until it has a tenant. And, even though no tenant has appeared, Brooks is planning to build three more structures in the same neighborhood.

Three miles away, SFC Engineering is designing a medical office building on Sally Sweets Way. And in Londonderry, Tower Hill Developments plans to expand an office building at the corner of Route 28 and Enterprise Way.

"It's kind of interesting that now we've got proposals for ... more buildings when we've got vacant space," said Ross Moldoff, planning director in Salem.

Salem has an office-space vacancy rate of 22.2 percent, according to Mike Harrington, managing broker for the Manchester office of economic forecaster CB Richard Ellis New England. That's up from 16.6 percent vacancy in 2006, and 16.8 percent vacancy in 2005, according to CB Richard Ellis.

All of those rates are higher than an average, healthy rental market, Harrington said.

"Once we break 10 percent (it's an unbalanced market). So, if you're around 9 to 8 percent vacancy, we really consider that to be a market in which you'd expect to have building," Harrington said.

Other communities nearby are doing better. Derry has a vacancy rate of 8.5 percent and Londonderry has a rate of 10 percent, Harrington said.

One reason for the discrepancy is price, Harrington said. Rent for a Salem office averages \$13 a square foot, while in Derry it averages \$12.50 and in Londonderry \$11. It might not sound like a lot, but multiplied over thousands of square feet and perhaps half a decade, business owners see a significant price difference.

The other reason for the high vacancy rate in Salem, Harrington said, is the economy. While there are

exceptions in the defense and high-tech industries, many businesses are nervous about expanding, he said.

Some developers optimistic

But Brooks Properties developer Eric Brooks intends to continue building — especially in Salem.

"We're not slowing down," he said. "We're moving forward."

Brooks — whose father, Harold Brooks, owns the family company — isn't worried about an economic slowdown or rising vacancy rates. That's largely because Brooks Properties has the financial resources to start a building and wait for tenants to lease space in it.

And while building more office space when you haven't filled the space you have might sound crazy, it might just make good business sense. Some companies in the area are eyeing expansion without much regard for the wider economy.

"We're ... planning on getting bigger," said Sonja Fridell, marketing coordinator for Amber Wave Systems in Salem.

While the 10-year-old semiconductor research company isn't planning to move across town — they're in a facility on Garabedian Drive — it might need more space in the coming years.

"We have the space right now. We're in an old Wal-Mart distribution center," Fridell said.

But, she added, there could be a day soon when the company is forced to start leasing other nearby office space in Salem.

But Chris Goodnow, a commercial real estate consultant in Southern New Hampshire, said many developers aren't counting on companies like Amber Wave to run out of space.

During an economic slowdown, or even a perceived one, many businesses aren't in the mood to expand, especially not into a new building, he said.

"For a new facility, a tenant has to be ready to pay more," he said, "but, in a challenging economy, paying more is not a very popular thing."

While Goodnow agreed that developers with a lot of capital can ride out a slowdown, or even a recession, he said anxiety among commercial property owners is high.

"I think, going forward, if a builder is intending to construct a facility on a speculative basis, there's a great deal of thought that has to go into that — and concern, frankly," Goodnow said.

Expert: Trend will reverse itself

The New Hampshire office vacancy rate along the Interstate 93 corridor went from 13.4 percent at the beginning of 2007 to 14.4 percent at the end of the year, according to Harrington, of CB Richard Ellis.

The trend will eventually reverse itself, Harrington said, but the big question is: How long will that take?

"There's no way to tell how long (a market correction) would take," Harrington said.

And that has many local developers worried, according to engineer Dave Jordan of SFC Engineering Partnership in Salem.

Jordan has been working on plans for a new medical office building on Sally Sweets Way as well as other projects. Lately, he said, many developers are expressing concern — although they're not necessarily backing away from projects.

"You'll find that most of them say yes, it is a concern," Jordan said. "Unless the person who is building it intends on occupying the building entirely themselves, then (vacancy rates are) always a concern."

But Andre Garron, director of planning and economic development in Londonderry, said there isn't much towns can do. While planning and zoning boards have oversight authority, they can't exactly reject a project because it doesn't make business sense to them.

"Whether or not they'd have grounds ... to deny something based on the economy? That's always a tough thing to prove (because) even the best economists can't put their finger on whether we're in a recession or not," he said.

Despite that, Garron isn't worried. At 11 percent, vacancy rates in Londonderry aren't much higher than normal right now.

"It doesn't seem like really a crisis situation or anything of that sort," he said. "Even in the best of times, there's some vacancy."

### **Commercial vacancy rates**

Salem: 22.2 percent

Hooksett: 11.5 percent

Manchester: 11.3 percent

Londonderry: 10.1 percent

Derry: 8.5 percent

Windham: 5.2 percent

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## William R. Schultz, 91

2/18/08



SALEM, N.H. — William R. Schultz, 91, a lifelong resident of Salem, N.H., died Saturday, Jan. 16, 2008 at the Caritas Holy Family Hospital, Methuen, surrounded by his daughters.

A native of Salem, N.H., Mr. Schultz owned and operated Schultz Farm in North Salem. He was a member of the NH Farm Bureau, founder and charter member of the Salem Conservation Commission, member of the Derry Path Finders Snow Mobile Club, and the East Coast Antique Tractor Club.

Mr. Schultz was a former volunteer fireman for the North Salem Fire Department.

He enjoyed working on old tractors and traveling. His greatest passion was when he owned and

trained his thoroughbred race horses.

He was predeceased by his wife, Margaret (Chadwick) Schultz. He is survived by three daughters, Joanne and her husband Geoff Hammett of Salem, Margaret and her husband Roger Putnam of Salem, Mary and her husband Thomas Campbell of Salem; four grandchildren, Matthew, Michael, and Melissa Putnam, and Kate Hammett; several nieces and nephews.

**ARRANGEMENTS:** Funeral services will be held Thursday, Feb. 21 at 10 a.m. at Douglas & Johnson Funeral Home, 214 Main St., Salem, N.H. Burial will follow in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, North Salem, N.H. Calling hours will be held Wednesday, Feb. 20 from 4 to 8 p.m. at the funeral home. Memorial contributions may be made to the Southeast Land Trust, P.O. Box 675, Exeter, NH 03833. To send a message of condolence to the family, please view the obituary at [www.douglasandjohnson.com](http://www.douglasandjohnson.com).

# Town Clerk Retiring

by Jay Hobson

Salem Town Clerk Barbara M. Lessard, 63, one of only two people to have held that position in the last 53 years will retire on March 14.

Lessard was elected 23 years ago after her predecessor, Eleanor Barron, who was as town clerk for 30 years retired.

"The position of town clerk is an elected official, but not a political position," Lessard said.

Not answerable to the selectmen or any other governing body, the town clerk is answerable only to the residents of the town.

"I have many duties such as voter registration, administering oaths of office, sheriffs writs, being in charge of all records and I am the one who is served when the town is sued," Lessard said.

Part of the job is being aware of the laws and various legal matters that keep Lessard in contact with officials in Concord.

"The biggest part of the job is elections. It's the town clerk's job to make sure the ballot boxes are working properly, poll workers are trained, absentee ballots are taken care of properly and making sure that election day goes smoothly and votes are counted accurately," Lessard said.

Although Lessard says she always liked the job, it does have its ups and downs.

"Election day totally stresses me.

So many absentee ballots make it difficult and making sure everything is done on time. On the other hand I love the research and being part of the life of the town," Lessard said.

Born in Fort Riley, Kansas, during World War II, Lessard moved to Salem at age 3. She attended Palmer School and graduated from Woodbury High School in 1962. After graduation, Lessard attended Merrimack College and married husband, Bill, now retired, in 1962. Together they have five children: Laurie Mathews of Derry; Suzanne Miller of Dallas, Texas; Brigitte Mlocek of Atkinson; Aimee Morris of Salem; and a son, Bill, who died in 1995.

Retirement holds a lot of prospects for Lessard.

"We have a family vacation planned at Walt Disney World and we look forward to spending part of the winter months in Florida, volunteering at the Salem Animal Rescue League and I'd like to play some golf and brush up on playing the piano," Lessard said.

Lessard's last day is supposed to be March 14, but she said the selectmen have asked her to stay on and assist with the transition as an hourly employee until the first election that the new town clerk will have to oversee is over. The election is shortly after her scheduled last day. Lessard agreed to stay.

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**Salem Community Patriot**

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6 - February 15, 2008

# Changes at Rockingham depend on Legislature

Company lobbies officials to support video slot machines

By GORDON FRASER  
STAFF WRITER

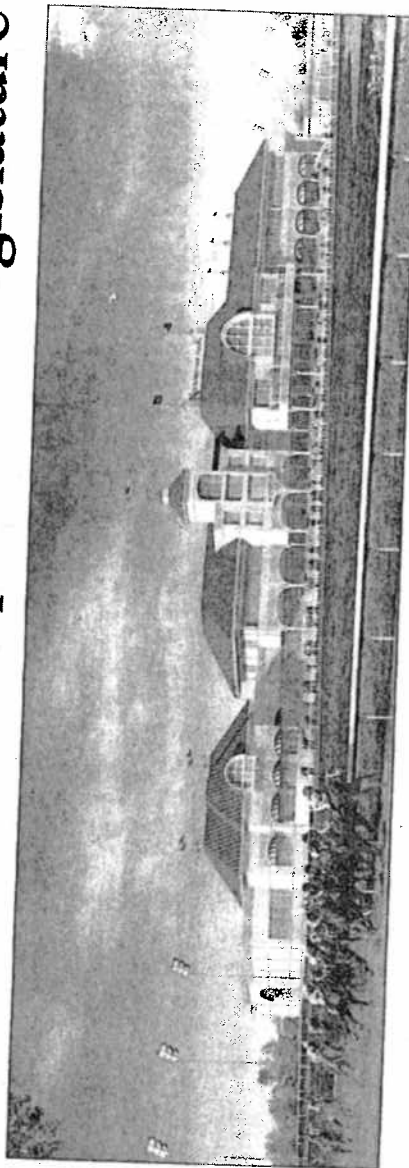
SALEM — It was standing room only yesterday when officials from Millennium Gaming Inc. presented their plans for a renovated Rockingham Park racetrack to town and state officials.

But those plans — which include video slot machines, thoroughbred horse races and an expanded facility — are dependent on legislative approval, which Rockingham Park has been lobbying for since the early 1990s.

Right now, video slot machines are illegal in New Hampshire.

Several local legislators, who have heard the pitch before, said they support more gambling at Rockingham Park, but think Gov. John Lynch will need to speak out on behalf of the proposal before a majority of lawmakers will approve it.

"I think if the governor were to come out and state (his support), it would happen," said Rep. Bob Elliott, R-Salem.



Above is an artist's rendering of Rockingham Park. Millennium Gaming Inc. is hoping officials support the addition of video slot machines. Courtesy photo

ed gambling operations are likely the only way the state will meet its financial needs.

"We need the revenue," Griffin said after yesterday's presentation. "You going to tax the people? I don't think so. They don't have any money as it is."

Yesterday's presentation didn't introduce much new information about Millennium's plans for Rockingham Park. But it did offer a first look at architectural renderings of the proposed facility, and it provided some updated financial estimates of

the project's financial future.

The state would make about \$147 million a year in tax revenue from Rockingham Park, according to an analysis by The Innovation Group, an economic forecaster hired by Millennium.

That outlook assumes a 50 percent tax rate on gross gambling revenues, and assumes casinos in Massachusetts and other gambling operations in New Hampshire also were allowed to go forward. If those gambling operations didn't go forward, the state could

make more, according to the Innovation Group analysis.

William Wortman of Millennium Gaming and Cannery Casinos in Las Vegas now owns a 20 percent stake in Rockingham Park.

He was at the event yesterday and has been lobbying hard to get a gambling measure passed here.

Salem voters have twice approved gambling in nonbinding referendums. The last time, in March 2003, 72 percent of Salem voters said they approved of video slot machines at Rockingham Park.

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Observer 11/31/08

# Company wants slots at Rockingham

BY DARRELL HALEN

[dhallen@yourneighborhoodnews.com](mailto:dhallen@yourneighborhoodnews.com)

An audience of business people, local officials and state legislators got a look at plans for a revitalized Rockingham Park, presented by a company that hopes to bring 3,000 video slot machines to the 101-year-old Seaboard landmark.

William Wortman, who owns 20 percent of the park, also hopes to return thoroughbred racing as part of his company's plans.

"I am committed to revitalizing Rockingham to bring it to its former grandeur," said Wortman, the co-owner of Millennium Gaming.

Millennium is the majority owner of Cannery Casino Resorts, which owns or leases four casinos in Las Vegas and Pennsylvania.

The audience, made up of about 50 people, were gathered inside Rockingham's clubhouse on Thursday, Jan. 24.

They also heard from Matthew Landry of The Innovation Group, a consulting company that estimated that slots at the racetrack could annually generate \$294 million to \$402 million, depending on how much competition there would be in Massachusetts and at greyhound tracks in New Hampshire.

Half of the revenues would



Courtesy, Illustration

The owners of Rockingham Park want to restore the racetrack to its former grandeur. Part of their plan includes installing about 3,000 video slot machines, which they say will add to state revenues.

go to the state in taxes, the study assumes.

For Millennium to bring slots to Rockingham, the state Legislature would have to allow for the expansion of gambling.

Gov. John Lynch has said it must be demonstrated to him that expanding gambling will not adversely affect the quality of life in the state before he would agree to it.

"We need the revenue. We

Please see RACETRACK page A-3

## RACETRACK: Company wants to add video poker to Rockingham renovation

Continued from page A-1

people could be employed when the project is complete.

If lawmakers agree to allow slots, Millennium could have a temporary facility up and running about eight months later.

A new clubhouse would include a retail shop, gaming areas, restaurants, space for banquets and conferences, a food court, an outside covered grandstand, and VIP boxes.

"This represents a very unique opportunity for all of us," said architect David Climans.

Rockingham, which opened in June, 1906, currently offers live harness racing, simulcast racing, bingo, Texas Hold 'Em Poker tournaments, various attractions and other activities.

people could be employed when the project is complete.

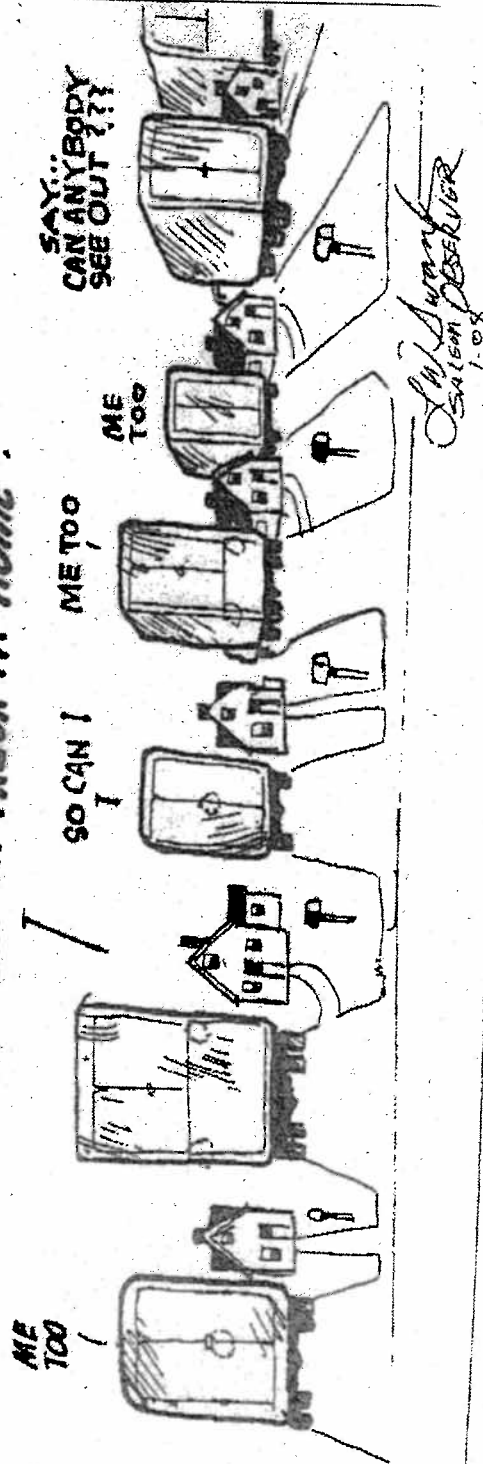
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1/31/08 Observer

... I'M ON THE PHONE ABOUT HOW BAD  
BUSINESS IS, AT LEAST 25%, SO...  
I CAN PARK MY TRUCK AT HOME!



# 'Home occupation permit' may stall over language

1/21/08

By GORDON FRASER  
STAFF WRITER

**SALEM** — An attempt to change the rules for commercial-style trucks in residential neighborhoods might stall over what some have called an obscure legal issue.

Selectman Patrick Hargreaves for months led an effort to allow commercial trucks and vans to park overnight outside their owners' homes.

Hargreaves, who owns a commercial van for his locksmith business, has been advocating on behalf of business owners who want to drive their commercial vehicles home after work at night.

But the remedy Hargreaves proposed — allowing vehicles weighing less than 10,001 pounds if the drivers get a "home occupation permit" — might not fix the problem, some Planning Board members worry.

"For the most part, the things that involve commercial-type ve-

hicles are not eligible to be treated as home occupations," said Planning Board member Robert Campbell.

Home occupation means at least 25 percent of the business must take place inside the home. An electrician who drives his van home at night, for instance, might not do any work inside his home.

But it's too late to drop the home occupation language. The proposed change was presented as a citizens petition, and the deadline to change it this year has passed. The question will appear on the March ballot in its current form, but it isn't clear if it will have the recommendation of the Planning Board.

Also, Hargreaves wants drivers of commercial vehicles to actually demonstrate a need for them. He doesn't want a proliferation of big trucks and vans in neighborhoods throughout Salem.

"We're trying to figure out exactly what's going on in town," he

said.

"That's something everyone seems to agree on."

"I don't know if you would solve problems by taking it out (of the 'home occupation' ordinance). You might create more problems," said Planning Director Ross Moldoff.

Campbell, of the Planning Board, also said he doesn't like the idea of large trucks and vans parking throughout residential neighborhoods.

"You have to look at it not from the point of view of the person who wants the truck, but you have to look at it from the point of view of a person in a 100-foot-wide lot who wants his neighborhood to look like (a residential area)," he said.

Campbell said he hasn't yet made a decision about the proposed ordinance.

The Planning Board will have a public hearing Jan. 29 to discuss the issue, and officials will get the opinion of the town's lawyer then.