



Revere JOURNAL

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Forum

OUR Opinions

AND THEY'RE OFF

Racing poised to return to Suffolk Downs

As we head toward spring and the rebirth of everything frozen and covered with snow and ice for months already, at least we do so in the knowledge that there will likely be 80 days of professional horse racing taking place at Suffolk Downs.

All the agreements necessary to make this happen apparently came together earlier this week among a host of parties all seeking the same thing – a great racing season for Suffolk Downs and its employees, its vendors, its horsemen and its horse racing fans.

This is good news for Suffolk Downs.

We have 80 solid reasons to celebrate the coming of the horsing season.

And they're off. We hope.

And we hope our friend, the Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo, will shortly notify the Senate President and the governor that he is ready to move on the expanded gambling bill.

In strictly local terms, nothing could be a bigger economic shot in the arm to this area than a casino at Suffolk Downs.

We know where the speaker's heart is – it is in this area which is his district.

It is in creating thousands of jobs and in causing a few hundred million in private capital to create an economic juggernaut out of Suffolk Downs.

What can be more important to the speaker than his district?

EXPENSIVE HOLIDAYS

This experiment isn't adding up

The so-called Suffolk County hack holidays – Bunker Hill Day and Evacuation Day – were literally done away with last year when the governor agreed with the Legislature that more money would be saved than is spent keeping Suffolk County offices open on these two days than closed.

So two important historical events – the evacuation of the port of Boston and the Battle of Bunker Hill holidays were relegated to the dustbin of history with the thinking behind the move that money will be saved by ridding ourselves of foolish holidays that no one else celebrates.

At any other time in our national history, such a move might have made common sense – but not in the modern world we live in.

Because of union contracts which guarantee the holidays as paid, even if the holidays cease to exist the public employees in Suffolk County must be paid.

In other words, the hack holidays are no more.

The price tag for getting rid of them, an added \$2 million over what it cost to honor the holidays.

Part of that cost will be born by Revere as the city will be forced to pay overtime to city employees to keep offices open.

As for the holidays themselves, we can understand doing away with Evacuation Day. No lives were lost when the Americans mounted cannon at Dorchester Heights and fired rounds at the British Fleet sitting in Boston Harbor causing the evacuation of the fleet from the harbor.

Bunker Hill Day honors hundreds who died or who were wounded in of the most momentous battles of the era against the vaunted British who had not been challenged in 300 years.

Bunker Hill Day should remain a significant day of memorial for those who lost their lives there in the name of the revolution.

But it won't and that's a shame.

And now we have to pay more to do away with the holiday than to keep it.

Lets get it straight

Last week, on page one we talked about Our Lady of Lourdes Church and that after seven years of disappointment, some good news had been received and that there was a chance – mind you a chance – that the fate of the church might be reversed by an edict from Rome – from the higher ups who sit near to the Pope.

On our editorial page, there was a piece that described how the Cardinal in Boston was going to hold a discussion with parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes Church to discuss what is to be done with it when it is sold.

No. We are not bi-polar. But there is a bit of truth in both these pieces that appeared in last week's newspaper.

According to John Verrengia, one of the pillars of the closed church, there might very well be a reopening ordered for it rather than a final discussion about how and to whom to sell the closed church property.

So it isn't really one or the other, it is a bit of both.

We hope the parishioners who have worked so hard for so many years will get to have their faith renewed in their parish church Our Lady of Lourdes.

What would be better than taking communion in that church sometime in the spring when it reopens?

And according to Verrengia, that might just happen.

The mayor's race

With about three months remaining before candidates for mayor pull their papers, there are two candidates for mayor – and the mayor himself who says he is not a candidate.

City Councillors Dan Rizzo and George Rotondo are both campaigning.

Rizzo has opened his headquarters on Broadway.

Both men are moving about the city.

School Committeewoman Carol Tye remains an enigma.

Is she running? Is she not running?

Only she knows and as we have reported time and again – only she knows and she isn't telling anyone else. Those claiming to know that she is running or those who claim they know she isn't running should keep their aberrant comments to themselves.

That being said, Rizzo has been advertising. He's held his official campaign kick-off. He opened his headquarters with some fanfare last week. He's got his committee working and he's hired professional political consultants as well.

He has told us he has a campaign plan and that everything right now is moving forward according to that plan.

The Big Show on St. Patrick's Day

City Councillor Dan Rizzo's Fourth Annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration will take place on Wednesday, March 16 from 6-10 p.m. at the Casa Lucia Function Facility, 61 Lucia Avenue Revere, MA.

There is a huge and prominent host committee including seven of Dan's colleagues on the city council, members of the school committee and well-known and highly respected members of the Revere business community.

Entertainment will be provided by the Black Band.

Contributions can be made payable to: The Committee to Elect Dan Rizzo, 35 Roland Road, Revere or to contribute online, got to www.danrizzo.org.

Rotondo has been continuing his door-to-door campaign which began some months back. He has rented headquarters and will have a campaign kickoff event tomorrow (March 3) from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Beachmont VFW. He has mailed out literature and announcements. He has kept a public posture and he has used the city council meetings, which are televised, to his advantage.

The mayor remains doing his duty in his city hall office, apparently awaiting the call from the governor that frees him of his responsibilities here.

That call is coming. It is coming soon and we continue to take the mayor at his word that he will not be running again.

The Northgate Mall

One of the most maligned malls in the history of local malls is the Northgate Mall on

Squire Road.

The city council has taken the mall to task a dozen times in the past 10 years, always wishing that something could be done with it.

The mall, today, cannot be maligned. It is a bustling, lively, well-maintained place with lots of stores and new retailers that have sprung up in the mall parking lot.

All in all, the place looks prosperous and busy – a testament to the mall owner's efforts to retail the place.

The new grocery store where the Stop and Shop used to be has been very busy and about the only big remaining space that is empty is the former Toys R US.

Some things remain the same and some things like the Northgate Mall are always changing.

GUEST Column

Efficiency equals savings

BY DAN RIZZO

Among the many ways I believe we can help save Revere money, one of the most important is making city government work more efficiently for the taxpayers of Revere.

Inefficiencies, especially on the part of state and city workers usually comes up around this time a year, coinciding with the infamous Evacuation Day holiday held every year on March 17.

This holiday was established with the highest ideals in mind, that of celebrating the day when the British were driven from Boston.

The holiday commemorates the evacuation of British forces from the city of Boston following the Siege of Boston, early in the American Revolutionary

War. Initially signed into law in by the City of Boston in 1901, this holiday has affected Revere since it was signed into law as a county holiday in 1938.

Last summer, legislators on Beacon Hill passed the budget for FY2011, which included an amendment requiring all state, county, and municipal offices to be "open and appropriately staffed" on March 17th.

This puts elected officials and municipal budgets in a very difficult position, as the holiday has been worked into the contracts of state and municipal workers' unions; now as a result of this amendment, the city has must pay city employees at a "holiday rate" for their time worked on Evacuation Day.

I realize that there are many who see this holiday as unfair, as it only applies to state and municipal employees. As a pri-

vate business owner for over 25 years, I understand this perception, as I've staffed my office each and every Evacuation Day, no matter how unfair my employees believed this was, having watched many of their friends and neighbors sleep-in late and take the day off.

This perception and in some cases, the reality that government is not working as efficiently as it should is something I will fight strongly against when I am elected Mayor. Through out my many years in business, I have always encouraged and exemplified a commitment to hard work, whether it meant staying at the office late, or working on days that many others may have had off. I will continue with this mindset and encourage a renewal of this work ethic in all aspects of my public service to the resi-

dents of Revere.

While we are all acutely aware of the financial challenges currently plaguing our state and our city, anyone can see that keeping people working on Evacuation Day is not in the best interests of taxpayers.

Like us in municipal government, our elected officials on Beacon Hill are battling to fight government inefficiencies and an uncertain economic future.

We are all working with declining tax revenues and continued difficult fiscal constraints. We must work together as we dig ourselves out of this recession.

One step in doing so is to keep workers home, saving the city money and respecting established contracts, until the matter can be officially resolved in future contract negotiation

COUNCIL Motions

11-068 Motion presented by Councillors Haas and Patch: That the Mayor request the Director of Planning and Community Development to develop a permanent improvement to the Ferrante Memorial at the intersection of Malden Street and Newhall Street. The memorial has been destroyed multiple times because of car accidents.

11-069 Motion presented by Councillor Haas: That the Mayor request a representative of Comcast to appear before the City Council to discuss the cost increase reflected on customer's bills.

11-070 Motion presented by Councillor Rotondo: That the Mayor look into the feasibility of offering early retirement to City of Revere employees if it is financially feasible. Also, that the Mayor consider scaling back hours in an attempt to decrease the amount of lay-offs in the next fiscal year.

11-071 Motion presented by Councillor Rotondo: That the Mayor request the owners of the Senior Day Care

Center located on Revere Beach Parkway to adhere to the special permit granted; in the particular parking and garbage pick-up issues.

11-072 Motion presented by Councillor Rotondo: That the Mayor and Treasurer look into the feasibility of the City of Revere emulating the Small Bank Initiative; which is a program to move money into small, local, community, and regional banks willing to commit to increasing their volume of small business loans.

11-073 Motion presented by Councillor Rotondo: That the Mayor take 91 Rumney Road by eminent domain for the purpose of converting the property into affordable housing or selling the property to recover unpaid taxes. Further, that the Mayor provide the City Council with a list of all properties that have defaulted on taxes for amounts greater than \$5000.

11-074 Motion presented by Councillor Guinasso: That the Mayor request the Department of Public Works to replace the

"No Trucking" sign on Patriot Parkway at Malden Street.

11-075 Motion presented by Councillor Guinasso: That the Mayor send a communication to Capital Waste Management requesting that their drivers do not use Patriot Parkway during non-trash collection days.

11-076 Motion presented by Councillor Correggio: That the Mayor utilize funding to prevent the closing of fire stations and personnel layoffs within the police and fire departments. This motion is made in the interest of public safety.

LATE MOTIONS

Motion presented by Councillor Guinasso: That the City Clerk send a communication to Revere Adult Day-Care at 765 Revere Beach Parkway to appear before the Revere City Council on March 7, 2010

for the purpose of discussing their admittance policy.

Motion presented by Councillor Rizzo: On behalf of the entire City Council, that a Certificate of Commendation be presented to Reverend Michael Guarino for his ten years of dedicated service as Pastor to the parishioners of St. Anthony's of Padua Church and for his leadership and spiritual guidance he has provided to so many Revere residents.

Motion presented by Councillor Powers: That the Mayor request Veteran Services to erect a memorial sign on Rice Avenue at the corner of Wadsworth Avenue in honor of Joseph W. DiCarlo, WWII Veteran, former Mayor, City Councillor, School Committee member, and Tax Collector of the City of Revere.

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