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The Providence Journal-Bulletin

September 1, 1994, Thursday, METRO WEST EDITION

SECTION: NEWS.

Pg. 1D

LENGTH: 457 words

HEADLINE: Repair of Allendale Dam being pursued, town says; Town Planner Joseph Rendine said that before repairs could begin the town had to get plans drawn and approved by assorted state and federal agencies.

BYLINE: BOB JAGOLINZER; Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

DATELINE: NORTH PROVIDENCE

BODY:

Town Planner Joseph Rendine yesterday strongly disputed a charge that the town has failed in the effort to repair the broken Allendale Dam.

In a printed statement, Rendine said that before repair work could begin the town had to get plans drawn and get them approved by assorted state and federal agencies.

That process is still going on, he said. The town is still trying to get its plans approved by the state Department of Environmental Management, which must issue a permit for work in wetlands.

Also the town must secure permission from a landowner in Johnston to cross his property so work can be done. But Mario Libutti, owner of Town Asphalt, wants to be paid for the right to cross his property.

The 1860s-vintage dam broke in 1991, turning what had been a small neighborhood pond into a mud flat with a small stream - the Woonasquatucket River - coursing through it. Nearby residents say the flat has become a home to rats.

Rendine said the project has also been reviewed by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"This is not an easy application" to get approved, because repairing the dam requires working in wetlands, Rendine said. "You can't just send a letter" to an agency informing it of the intention to start work.

Rendine made the statements in response to a remark from Steven A. Pitassi, an unendorsed Democratic Town Council candidate in District One, who plans to present a petition to the Town Council next week, asking council members to back the project.

On Tuesday Pitassi said the town had "dropped the ball" with the project, because the dam remains unrepaired.

Since the dam broke Pitassi "has never called my office" to get information on the project, Rendine said. "Political gain is his game."

Pitassi said he decided to push the issue after several residents complained to him about the matter while he was campaigning. And, he said, he feels an election year is the time to push this matter.

The project is complicated by several other factors, including the fact that the dam is privately owned, that no one is sure of the cost of the project and that there is no clear-cut financing plan in place.

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Mayor G. Richard Fossa, who has expressed reservations about the potential cost of the project, said the town is ready to do "anything it can" to get the dam rebuilt.

But he noted that the town has a deficit of more than \$5 million and is unable to finance a rebuilding project.

Rendine said the dam is privately owned, by Allendale Mill Associates, a condominium association.

So, Fossa said, a non-profit organization probably must be set up to funnel government money to the project.

LOAD-DATE: February 24, 1995

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November 2, 1994, Wednesday, ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: NEWS.

Pg. 8D

LENGTH: 480 words

HEADLINE: Corps of Engineers will repair N. Providence's Allendale Dam; The government will contribute \$67,500 toward the estimated \$100,000 cost of repairing the 1860s-vintage earth and wood dam, with the town providing the rest.

BYLINE: BOB JAGOLINZER; Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

DATELINE: NORTH PROVIDENCE

BODY:

Repair of the broken Allendale Dam, which once formed a small pond on the Woonasquatucket River, has become an official project of the nation's premier dam builders - the Army Corps of Engineers.

The quarter-mile-long dam was breached in 1991, leaving a mud flat and stream in place of a shallow pond that once was a neighborhood fishing hole.

Earlier this year a former Town Council candidate contended that the town had dropped the ball in efforts to get the dam repaired. Town officials said the delays have been caused by a number of factors, including objections raised by the state Department of Environmental Management under provisions of the state wetlands law.

Last Thursday, four officials from the Corps' New England regional office in Waltham, Mass., accompanied Mayor G. Richard Fossa and several other town officials on a tour of the site, off Woonasquatucket Avenue and behind the former Allendale Mill complex, most of which is now condominium units.

Authorization gained in 1992

Authorization for the project was included in the 1992 Water Resources Development Act, thanks to the efforts of Sen. John H. Chafee, at the request of town officials.

But money for the repairs was appropriated by Congress only this year, according to Robert H. Byrne Jr., program-management chief for the Corps of Engineers' New England division.

The government will contribute \$67,500 toward the estimated \$100,000 cost of repairing the 1860s-vintage earth and wood dam, with the town providing the rest.

"For \$67,500 we wanted to see what kind of a dam this is," said Byrne as he viewed the dam last week.

He said the Corps would supervise the project and award construction contracts. Corps officials offered no timetable for the overall project; the first step, though, is a series of preliminary studies expected to take several months.

Cost has been a major concern to Mayor Fossa, who fears the eventual price tag could be closer to \$500,000 than \$100,000. As he showed the Corps personnel around the site, Fossa several times mentioned that concern.

Corps will seek exact cost figure

Byrne said the Corps would try to come up with a precise cost. By law, he said, the Corps could spend up to 20 percent more than the authorized amount without congressional authorization. Beyond that, he said, "we'd have to go back to Congress" for more money, he said.

Beyond the uncertainty of the cost and the still-unresolved wetlands concerns raised by DEM, the project is complicated by the fact that the dam is privately owned, by the Allendale condominium owners association.

So either the town would have to take it over or a nonprofit agency must be set up to hold title.

That should not be a problem, according to town planner Joseph Rendine, who said the association has told officials it is willing to set up the corporation.

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March 29, 1995, Wednesday, METRO WEST EDITION

SECTION: NEWS.

Pg. 1D

LENGTH: 401 words

HEADLINE: Corps estimates Allendale Dam will cost \$350,000 to repair;
Many obstacles still impede the project. Congress must approve extra money, and the dam's ownership must change.

BYLINE: BOB JAGOLINZER, Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

DATELINE: NORTH PROVIDENCE

BODY:

The cost of repairing the broken Allendale Dam, initially estimated at \$90,000, will probably be about \$350,000, according to the Army Corps of Engineers.

In a letter sent to town officials recently, Corps officials said the estimate is based on the projected cost of building a new concrete dam, demolishing the existing wooden dam, design work, administrative costs and inflation.

The quarter-mile-long dam on the Woonasquatucket River, which dated to the 1860s, broke in 1991, draining a scenic pond. Engineering studies came up with the \$90,000 estimate for repairs. At the behest of Sen. John H. Chafee, federal authorization for the project was included in the 1992 Water Resources Development Act.

At the time, based on the \$90,000 estimate, the federal government agreed to contribute \$67,500, or 75 percent, of the cost. The state or town is to pay the rest.

Last fall, Corps officials, who were puzzled at a dam costing only \$67,500, toured the site and said they would do a more detailed cost estimate.

But because the new estimate is more than 20 percent higher than the original authorization, the Corps must seek approval from Congress for the money, said Robert J. Gauvreau, acting director of programs and management for the Corps' New England division.

The \$350,000 is considered to be a high estimate. "It could be lower," depending on the results of studies that are to be done, Gauvreau said.

Yesterday Gauvreau said the new estimate must be reviewed by Corps headquarters before it is sent to Congress.

Even if Congress approves the extra money, the Corps will not seek bids on the project until the town or a nonprofit agency owns the dam. Now it is owned by the Allendale Condominium Association.

Owners would have to surrender their property rights to the dam. James Taylor, who manages the condominium development, sees "no problems" with owners giving up title to the dam.

Mayor G. Richard Fossa favors the nonprofit group taking it over.

The Allendale Dam Reparation Committee is working on getting incorporated as a nonprofit organization, said committee chairman Stephen A. Pitassi.

Providence Journal-Bulletin, March 29, 1995

He said the group hopes to get a state grant to hire a lawyer and to do other work to get title to the property.

Legislation was introduced in both houses of the General Assembly yesterday to give the committee a state grant of \$95,000 for the project.

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August 29, 1995, Tuesday. NORTH WEST EDITION

SECTION: NEWS.

Pg. 1D

LENGTH: 515 words

HEADLINE: Allendale Dam restoration picks up steam;
The new state budget earmarks \$45,000 for replacing the century-old dam and refilling a muddy flat with its historical pond.

BYLINE: C.J. CHIVERS: Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

DATELINE: NORTH PROVIDENCE

BODY:

It was once an 8-foot drop of sparkling water from the top the Allendale Dam to the Woonasquatucket River. Yesterday, it was little more than a trickle of water escaping through a raft of junk.

The dam gave way in November 1991, draining the pond behind it and, for a group of residents, washing away a unique North Providence lifestyle.

"I've been here all my life," said Virginia Fitzgerald, 56, of 41 Stevens St. "We always used the river. My children loved it; we had a canoe. My son was like Mark Twain out there."

Now, with a \$45,000 grant earmarked in the new state budget, state Rep. Bambilyn Cambio says that officials have taken another step toward replacing the century-old dam, and refilling the muddy flat with its historical pond.

The money, which was allocated to the state Department of Environmental Management's Planning and Development Division, will be put toward the cost of the dam project.

"There has never been a doubt on the part of North Providence officials about the urgent need to rebuild this dam," Cambio said.

In the years since the dam let go, the wheels of government have been turning slowly in the matter of dam restoration. But a group of Johnston and North Providence residents, called the Allendale Dam Reparation Committee, has worked to keep the project alive.

Four problems have complicated the effort, said Cambio, who is a member of the group.

First, at \$100,000, the early cost estimates were unrealistically low. Then, project coordinators learned that they must receive permission to develop the dam from condominium owners at the adjacent property. Third, the owner of an asphalt business that abuts property near the dam wants compensation for the use of his land, should restoration occur. And last, coordinators have had to synchronize the tight budgets of the town, the state and the federal government, which would share the cost of replacing the dam.

"It seems at though we are making some headway here," Cambio said. "The DEM is on board."

Cambio said that the cost estimate has been adjusted to about \$300,000, and that the former mayoral administration of Salvatore Mancini had begun work on getting clear title to the dam.

"Some preliminary work had been done by the prior administration," she said. "Now it's just a matter of starting up from where they left off."

With the state financing in place, Cambio said, she will contact the owner of the asphalt company again.

Although the pond vanished overnight, both Cambio and Mayor G. Richard Fossa caution that bringing it back will continue to take time. Today it is carpeted with knee-high grass and sluiced by a 20-foot-wide stream. Dragonflies zip by on the wind, and land on a wide, spongy flat.

Residents say that the marsh is no substitute, and that they will continue to work to get their pond back, that, rather than drawing a crowd, the present-day bog drives people away.

"I think because of the swampiness the mosquitoes have more places to lay their eggs," Fitzgerald said. "I had a cookout yesterday and we couldn't even sit."

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September 12, 1995, Tuesday. NORTH WEST EDITION

SECTION: NEWS.

Pg. 1C

LENGTH: 643 words

HEADLINE: Allendale Dam in a race against the clock;
If rebuilding plans are not in place by June 30, 1996, the state can withdraw \$45,000 it has promised for the reconstruction of the historical dam, which washed away four years ago.

BYLINE: MICHAEL MAYNARD; Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

DATELINE: NORTH PROVIDENCE

BODY:

State Rep. Bambilyn Cambio recently secured \$45,000 in state money to help rebuild the historical Allendale Dam that washed away almost four years ago.

But if the rebuilding plans are not in place by June 30, 1996, the state may reclaim that money. So for Cambio and other members of the Allendale Dam Reparation Project, the clock is ticking.

Project members met last night in a meeting room at Town Hall to discuss their options and map strategy.

The state money will help the project along, but it will not come close to the \$300,000 that the Army Corps of Engineers estimates the dam will cost to construct. Supporters are counting on Sen. John H. Chafee's clout to secure federal money for the remainder of the tab.

The timber-and-earth dam held back the Woonasquatucket River for more than a century. When it burst in November 1991, it emptied a wide section of the waterway downstream into the Providence River.

The dam - part of the mill complex on the National Register of Historic Places - created a pond for local residents. The pond provided a rustic vista for residents, some of whom used it for fishing and canoeing. Now, knee-high grass covers what was the pond, and a 20-foot stream runs through the middle.

From the day the dam burst, almost everyone has agreed that the dam should be rebuilt. But deciding who would foot the bill was harder.

Chafee has added the Allendale Dam project to the Water Resources Development Act of 1995. The bill authorizes \$350,000 for the dam project, including \$262,500 in federal money.

If and when that money will emerge from the federal budget process is unknown, said James Barden, a Chafee aide who attended the meeting.

"The time frame on when they pass these bills is not something we have control over," Barden said.

The project would be put on the appropriations bill for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, 1996. The federal money would be available after that date.

The legislation would have to be passed by the House and Senate, and even then might have to survive the scrutiny of a conference committee.

"I think the chances are pretty good," Barden said. "Senator Chafee's got a good track record on this."

Federal money for the project would have to be channeled through a nonprofit corporation.

The dam reparation committee was formed as a nonprofit organization, and a condominium complex bordering the former pond has the same status.

James Taylor, president of the Mill at Allendale Condominium Association, said last night that it might be easier for the association to take the lead. Barden said he would check the regulations regarding nonprofit associations.

Taylor said the Mill at Allendale could then give the dam "to whoever wants it."

There are many abutters to the property, including 51 owners of condominiums in the Mill at Allendale and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The FDIC took ownership over part of the complex after the First Mutual Bank of Boston became insolvent.

North Providence has already spent \$10,500 on plans to replace the dam.

"It's money well spent if the end result is we get the dam fixed," said Mayor G. Richard Fossa. "We'd love to see it repaired tomorrow and have water back on Woonasquatucket Avenue. That's the goal."

Fossa said legal issues, not financial, present the stumbling blocks for a speedy repair.

Save the Bay might help in clearing up some of those legal issues, according to Topher Hamblett, who handles outreach activities for the organization.

A legal committee is scheduled to take up the Allendale Dam project at a meeting tonight. Hamblett said several members of that committee were interested in taking on the issue. "Hopefully, I will come back with some good news soon," Hamblett said.

The lawyers would undertake title searches and title-clearing issues.

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April 19, 1996, Friday, NORTH WEST EDITION

SECTION: NEWS.

Pg. 1C

LENGTH: 367 words

HEADLINE: Dam repair moves closer to reality:

Raffle money is slated for title research on the historic Lymanville dam, which let go in 1991, reducing a scenic pond to a mudflat.

BYLINE: C.J. CHIVERS: Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

DATELINE: NORTH PROVIDENCE

BODY:

After a recent raffle of free dinners at local restaurants, the Allendale Dam Reparation Committee is one step closer to restoring Lymanville's historic dam, which let go in 1991.

"I think this is very positive for the town," said Steven Pitassi, the committee's chairman. "If we can rebuild this dam and do some replanting there, we could restore a beautiful area of the town."

The group sold 80 raffle tickets at \$20 each in recent weeks, producing funds to search for a lawyer. The lawyer will research the title concerns - Pitassi called them "a tangle" - that must be resolved before reconstruction can begin.

Those who remember the old pond on the Woonasquatucket River seek new hope for a sad tale.

A small portion of the dam gave way one night in November 1991, allowing most of the water to drain downstream. By sunrise, a scenic pond had been reduced to mudflat diorama: gasping fish, feasting gulls and astonished residents.

Soon a group of Lymanville residents formed the Allendale Dam Reparation Committee, and began the drive to rebuild the dam and recapture the pond.

It has been a complicated and slow process. But over time, the committee has gained local and state commitments for reconstruction. State Rep. Bambilyn Breece Cambio, D-North Providence, helped secure \$45,000 from this year's state budget. Mayor G. Richard Fossa has pledged \$30,000 from the town.

The Army Corps of Engineers has estimated a \$300,000 price tag for the project, Pitassi said, and U.S. Sen. John F. Chafee is trying to shepherd a bill for the remaining cash.

But clearance to rebuild the dam still requires sticky title work. The old Allendale Mill complex has been converted to 51 condominiums, and each household and mortgage holder must sign off on the project. Pitassi said a lawyer, which the group hopes to retain at a reduced rate, will be looking into the matter.

The group has held meetings with residents and condominium owners, and Pitassi said the questions have been mostly technical.

"I really can't see anyone objecting," Pitassi said yesterday. "Bringing back the lake will enhance the value of the properties, and the properties in surrounding areas."

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September 25, 1996, Wednesday, NORTH WEST EDITION

SECTION: NEWS.

Pg. 1C

LENGTH: 412 words

HEADLINE: Money secured for dam project;

The \$350,000 reconstruction of the Allendale Dam might begin in the spring if clear title to the land is obtained from condominium owners.

BYLINE: C.J. CHIVERS; Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

DATELINE: NORTH PROVIDENCE

BODY:

In the years since the old Allendale Dam burst, letting a neighborhood pond rush down the Woonasquatucket River and into Narragansett Bay, residents have held out hope that Sen. John H. Chafee would come up with the federal money needed to replace the crumbled earthworks.

Now, it seems, Chafee has.

As chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, Chafee announced last week that the federal government has earmarked \$195,000 to replace the dam, which let go in November 1991.

The financing was approved in the Senate last week and now awaits President Clinton's approval.

"The President's signature is expected," said John Goodman, spokesman for Chafee.

If approved, the \$195,000 will all but finalize the complicated financial package necessary to underwrite the Army Corps of Engineers project.

The \$195,000 will be combined with \$67,500 Chafee secured in 1992, and another \$50,000 approved by the General Assembly. The town has pledged to kick in the remaining \$40,000, which would round out the Corps' \$350,000 construction estimate.

Steven Pitassi, chairman of the local Allendale Dam Reparations Committee, welcomed the news.

"When we started this, I thought raising the money would be the most difficult part," he said. "I'm very happy."

With the financial package coming together, the project faces at least one more hurdle: getting title to the property on which the dam sits. The property is owned by the nearby condominium development, which has about 55 units.

Robert A. Peretti, the lawyer for the committee, said yesterday that the condominium association has agreed to transfer ownership of the dam to the committee, but the transaction will need the approval of each of the 55 unit owners and their lending institutions.

Peretti has begun the title search, a process that should identify all 55 owners and, where appropriate, their banks. He hopes to contact each owner this fall, and ask them to sign off on the transfer.

Because any bank that resists could wreck the deal, this unresolved legal question could bring a season of nail-biting.

But Pitassi remains confident that the project will succeed, and that groundbreaking for the dam could begin next spring. This would mean fishing, canoeing and the restoration of a small bit of aquatic habitat in the crowded town.

"We've come a long way already," Pitassi said. "What's left is not going to be easy, but we're going to get it done."

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April 29, 1997, Tuesday, NORTH WEST EDITION

SECTION: NEWS,

Pg. 1C

LENGTH: 393 words

HEADLINE: Dam work falling into place;
The Army Corps of Engineers hopes to replace the old Allendale Dam this summer.

BYLINE: C.J. CHIVERS; Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

DATELINE: NORTH PROVIDENCE

BODY:

Six years after the old Allendale Dam ruptured in the night, letting the pond's water slip down the Woonasquatucket River into Narragansett Bay, the Army Corps of Engineers has announced its plan to build a replacement.

The work is set to begin this summer, if all of the project's many elements - funding, construction planning and acquisition of title - can come together in the next few months.

"Everybody has been really working in concert, and now it's all coming to fruition," said lawyer Robert A. Peretti. "Hopefully there won't be any snags."

Peretti is at work on the project's last significant hurdle: getting clear title to the land adjacent to the dam, which once harnessed power for the Allendale Mill.

He said a surveyor hired last month by the Allendale Dam Reparations Committee is due back soon with a precise survey of the area, which Peretti can use to approach banks and residents in obtaining a release for the project.

"It's a very positive project," Peretti said, adding that it has had support from every level: residents to the federal government, including Sen. John H. Chafee.

The other key piece in the equation, - money-, appears to be secure, according to town and state officials.

Most of the \$350,000 required for the repair will come from federal coffers, courtesy of the federal Water Resources Development Act of 1996. A quarter of the money-, about \$90,000-, will come from state and local budgets.

Sen. John A. Celona, D-North Providence, said yesterday that the state has earmarked \$50,000 in previous budgets, and is considering more funding in its current session.

Mayor A. Ralph Mollis said the difference will be provided by the town.

"I see this project getting off the ground very soon," Mollis said.

Once work begins, the repairs will be done in two phases, giving a modern look to the circa-1860 dam.

First, the current gate will be repaired and buttressed with stop logs.

Providence Journal-Bulletin, April 29, 1997

Then the 105-foot timber spillway will be excavated and replaced with a dam made of reinforced concrete. This effort will require resetting the stones on the Johnston side of the dam.

Steven Pitassi, who has been active in the work of the reparations committee, said the final steps in the project appear at hand.

"This could happen very, very quickly if the transfer goes smoothly," he said.

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February 12, 1999, Friday. ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: NEWS.

Pg. 16A

LENGTH: 1378 words

HEADLINE: THE BUDGET STATE EMPLOYEES

BODY:

... bring the process "very close" to the goal of a 30-day turnaround.

SEPTIC-SYSTEM USERS

Safer and more advanced septic systems may be on the way to a backyard near you. To come into compliance with a 1996 state law, the governor proposes hiring an engineer at DEM to license and supervise companies that design and install septic systems. Homeowners who want a septic system should expect a quicker response to their requests for a permit to install one, DEM officials say.

OWNERS OF UNDERGROUND TANKS

The governor proposes using about \$600,000 in unissued bonds from 1985 to start a revolving loan fund to replace underground storage tanks.

Another \$5.5 million will help remove underground fuel storage tanks at T.F. Green Airport and other state facilities.

DAM REPAIRS

For residents along the Woonasquatucket River, the governor's budget contains \$50,000 for repairs to the Allendale Dam. The dam is one of many around the state that have fallen into disrepair. The matter has taken on additional urgency along the Woonasquatucket, where federal environmental officials have discovered high levels of dioxin, a cancer-causing byproduct of paper mills, in the sediment backed up behind the dam.

DEAF CHILDREN

The state's 144 students, ages 3 through 21, at the School for the Deaf, in Providence, are in line for some improvements to their gym. The budget contains \$400,000 over the next two years to upgrade the girls locker room (making it as large as the boys locker room), to make the bathrooms handicapped accessible and to repair the gym floor.

HANDICAPPED PEOPLE

Some \$7.8 million has been proposed for the repair and rehabilitation of state facilities to provide handicap access.

COMMUTERS

About \$30 million in spending has been proposed for the state ...