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Proposal to restore the Conimicut Shoals Lighthouse

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The Conimicut Shoals Lighthouse sits offshore on a rocky ledge at the edge of Conimicut Point Park in Warwick. Listed on the National Historic Register, the lighthouse has provided safe passage to vessels navigating the dangerous, rocky waters between Rocky Point and Bristol for well over 100 years. This month, the city council will be considering a proposal for the city to enter into a long-term lease agreement with a non-profit organization that wants to restore the lighthouse and open it to the public.

Under terms of the proposal, the organization would assume responsibility for costs and work associated with restoring the lighthouse and its maintenance and operation and would offer seasonal (spring through fall) tours and, eventually, with appropriate approvals, overnight stays.

The city would retain ownership of the lighthouse and the ability to hold special events, tours, and the like. Any proceeds New England Tourism and Restoration Company realizes from its operations would be re-invested for maintenance, restoration and small employee stipends. No direct city funds would be spent on the project.

The organization is situated, upon approval, to begin immediately with the first phase of restoration, which includes exterior painting, cleaning, prep work and interior painting, lead paint and asbestos tile removal, window repair and repair of any leaking pipes. It would begin offering tours while work is ongoing and future plans include collaboration with organizations such as Save The Bay to further promote environmental and historic preservation education and outreach activities.

The partnership would help us to reach our goal to preserve and maintain the historic significance of the lighthouse, open the lighthouse to the public for use as an educational and historic resource, and incorporate it into the continual development of the Conimicut Point Park.

The proposal already has the support of several organizations, including the Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, the Providence/Warwick Convention and Visitors' Bureau, the Conimicut Village Association, and the publisher of the local newspaper.

We are excited about the possibilities that this partnership brings because it will ensure that the lighthouse is available for future generations to enjoy, promote our community's rich history, complement ongoing efforts to revitalize Conimicut Village, and enhance the local and statewide tourism industry and economy.

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick and the chairman of the RIPTA board of directors.

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