



Indeglia Lutrario

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

*Brendan J. Quinn, Esq.
Brendan.Quinn@indegliaw.com*

February 23, 2022

**Via Electronic Mail: HouseMunicipalGovernmentandHousing@rilegislature.gov
& Regular Mail**

House Committee on Municipal Government & Housing
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: 2022 H-7144 - An Act Relating to Taxation – Property Subject to Taxation – Exempts from taxation the real and tangible personal property of the Old and Ancient Rowers Society of Rhode Island located in North Kingstown.

Dear Members of the House Committee on Municipal Government & Housing:

As you are aware, I appeared before the Committee on February 10, 2022, on behalf of the Old and Ancient Rowers Society of Rhode Island (“OARS”) to support its proposed tax exemption contained in House Bill No. 7144. Representative Morales and Representative Speakman both asked specific questions in regard to OARS, which I indicated I would obtain responses to. I corresponded with Chris Yun, the Secretary and a Director of OARS, who passed the questions along to the other officers and directors. The responses to the questions from Representative Morales and Representative Speakman are attached to this letter for your review (See Exhibit A).

In addition, OARS obtained various letters of support from members of the community in preparation for the North Kingstown Town Council Meeting on September 20, 2021. Those letters, while addressed to the North Kingstown Town Council, are also attached hereto to demonstrate the strong community support for OARS (See Exhibit B).

In the event that any of the OARS responses are insufficient or you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at Brendan.Quinn@Indegliaw.com or by telephone at (401) 886-9240.

Sincerely,

Brendan J. Quinn, Esq.

Enclosures

cc: Vincent A. Indeglia, Esq.
Chris Yun

What is the tax revenue generated by the property at 166 Walmsley Lane?

OARS of RI currently pays property taxes of \$2,229.93 per quarter (\$8,919.72 annually) to the Town of North Kingstown.

What are the demographics of the participants in OARS programs?

First and foremost, OARS welcomes any student interested in getting involved in rowing or crew to participate its programs. Participants range in age from 15 years of age to 60 years of age.

From a socio-economic perspective, junior rowers primarily are enrolled in public schools within Washington County, including several from North Kingstown. Some are from single parent homes. The URI Crew Club draws from a wide variety of backgrounds, with the majority hailing from Rhode Island.

The URI Crew Club is currently split roughly 50/50 between women and men. Within the Crew, there are there are White, Hispanic, Asian American and Black student-athletes.

The OARS junior rowing program for high school aged students has consisted predominantly of young women, at a roughly 70/30 split between young women and young men. Part of the draw is that young women have the opportunity to row at the collegiate level and earn scholarships; learning to row while in high school is a significant asset. Student-athletes have typically been white and Asian American. We would like to see more students of color participate.

The Veteran's rowing program has consisted of both men and women, and have been predominately white participants.

The Open/Adult Learn to Row program attracted a roughly 80/20 female/male split, and all participants were white.

Chris Yun, one of OARS Board members, and former member of the URI Crew, is an Asian American individual.

What does it cost to become a member of OARS/participate in OARS programs?

There are two primary groups that the OARS boathouse serves; in and of itself, OARS is not currently a "membership" organization, per se. It should be noted that the pandemic has put a significant dent in OARS' ability to run full-fledged community programs.

1. Currently, the University of Rhode Island Crew Club (co-ed), pays OARS \$12,000/year to utilize the boathouse which includes all utilities (except heating, which is paid for by the University), maintenance, and upkeep. The boathouse is available to the team essentially 24/7, and houses their weight room and rowing machines, locker room facilities, and meeting room, in addition to

their rowing shells. The crew is currently 60 members strong, representing both men and women, and includes student-athletes of color.

2. Community and Veteran's Rowing

- Freedom Rows Veteran Rowing Program: There is no fee for individuals to participate in an OARS sponsored (under the moniker "Narrow River Rowing), "Freedom Rows" rowing program for military veterans (and spouses). This program gives military veterans the opportunity to learn how to row, and offers multiple benefits from not only physical, but also mental health perspectives. OARS has applied and received a grant from US Rowing to host this program.
- Junior Rowing for high school aged boys and girls. In 2020, OARS introduced programs for high school aged boys and girls. Depending on the program – on water vs. on-land fitness training, and time of year – the fee per student ranges from \$150 (winter indoor land training for 4-6 weeks) to \$615 (summer on water program for 6-7 weeks). Programs typically run four days/week. The program is open to any high school aged student, regardless of rowing experience. For students unable to pay the fee, OARS endeavors to offer alternatives to paying the fee, such as service hours at the boathouse. OARS does not turn away students interested in rowing if their financial situation would make it difficult to do so. The closest high school rowing programs are located in Providence, RI and Stonington, CT. Due to its fairly new status, our community program has not yet made a targeted initiative to recruit students of color, and understand that this is an important aspect of a well-run community program. Our junior program has consisted primarily of young women, and included an Asian American student-athlete.
- Open Rowing: this was a pilot program in summer 2021 for adults interested in learning to row. The program ran for 5 weeks, 3 days/week and the fee was \$300.
- Collegiate Summer Rowing: this program was offered from June-August, and the fee to participate was \$300 per rower (5 days/week for 10 weeks).

The fees are competitive, and lower than similar programs in RI, CT and MA.



NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

PO Box 8, Saunderstown, RI 02874
narrowriver.org nrpa@narrowriver.org

September 10, 2021

North Kingstown Town Council
100 Fairway Drive
North Kingstown, RI 02852

Dear North Kingstown Town Councilors –

Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) supports the Old and Ancient Rowing Society (OARS) request for an exemption from property tax.

For many years, OARS has been an important partner to NRPA in our mission to protect, preserve and restore the natural environment of Narrow River (Pettaquamscutt Estuary).

Starting in 2007, OARS has generously hosted NRPA's Narrow River Turnaround Swim. This event, a fundraiser for NRPA, highlights the very good water quality of Narrow River and encourages responsible enjoyment of the area. OARS has allowed us to use their facilities to host the event each June at no charge to us. They always make sure that the grass is mowed and someone opens the building for us in the early morning.

In 2017, volunteers from the RI Crew Club that row at OARS planted salt marsh grass seedlings in Lower Narrow River as part of our salt marsh restoration project.

Each year, NRPA holds Spring and Fall 'River Cleanups'. For years now, OARS has permitted our volunteers to discard trash found during the cleanup of La Farge Park into their dumpster. This saves us time, energy, and tipping fees that would be required to pick up and dispose of the cans, bottles, fishing line, plastic wrap, old tires and more that we pull out of the shoreline.

OARS has proven to be a true community partner for decades and NRPA is proud to partner with them. We ask that you support their application for property tax exemption.

Many thanks,

Richard Grant

Richard Grant, President, NRPA



Readjustment Counseling Service
2038 Warwick Avenue
Warwick, RI 02889
Tel. (401) 739-0167
Fax. (401) 739-7705



01 June 2021

URI Rowing Team
Attn: Coach Timothy Nesselrodt et al.

Dear URI Rowing Team

I wanted to thank you for allowing me to hold a Therapeutic Recreational Group with your organization. The opportunity to introduce Veterans to Competitive Rowing allowed my Veterans the chance to practice positive Behavioral Activation and remind them of healthy competition, teamwork, and camaraderie. After the event my Veterans reported positive changes via increased self-worth and increased focus on a meaningful task. The fact that we were able to complete the activity made positive memories that the group will not forget.

I have found that Rowing provided the group with an alternative therapy modality of Mindfulness. Your group of volunteers possess the needed skills and abilities to teach. The volunteers were patient, approachable, and understand what is welcoming to Veterans. The balance of personal attention was appropriate in that the group could build on their skills independently but know that help was available if needed. I know for myself the serenity of a good work out, confident community, and laughter brought me momentary peace.

I just wanted to thank you and thank the volunteers for all that you do to support Veterans.

God Bless America,

Paul A. Santilli
698006

Paul Santilli, LCSW
Readjustment Counselor

Digitally signed by Paul A.
Santilli 698006
Date: 2021.06.01 15:57:05 -04'00'

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Providence Healthcare System

830 Chalkstone Avenue
Providence, RI 02908
www.providence.va.gov

650/135

June 16, 2021

Mr. Timothy Nesselrodt
University of Rhode Island
Tim.nesselrodt@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Nesselrodt:

Please accept my sincere thanks on behalf of the six (6) Veteran patients who were afforded the opportunity to go rowing on May 29th. The donation of your instructors' time and talents to coach and train these Veterans in "the finer points" of rowing demonstrates your compassion and appreciation for those who sacrificed so much to keep us free. I was told afterward that the Veterans thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and you can be assured that you made a direct, positive impact on them.

It is the generosity and thoughtfulness of caring individuals such as you and your staff that provides that "little something extra" that would not otherwise be available to our Veterans.

Thank you once again. Your donation was most welcome.

Sincerely,

Donna Russillo
Chief, Voluntary Service

In accordance with VHA Directive 4721, we are required to state, "The Department of Veterans Affairs did not provide you, the donor, any goods or services in consideration in whole or part for your contribution."

July 12, 2021

Kevin & Lori McGrady

36 Aspen Ct

North Kingstown, RI 02852

To the Members of the North Kingstown Town Council:

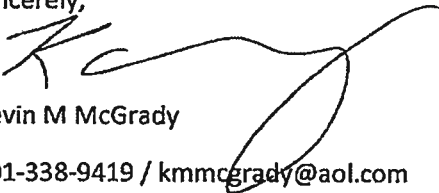
My name is Kevin McGrady; I am writing a letter of support for OARS of RI. My children, Kayla and Alyssa McGrady, have been participating in junior rowing programs out of the OARS of RI boathouse at 166 Walmsley Lane for over 2 years. To say we are grateful to have this program is an understatement; Both Kayla and Alyssa have developed confidence, new friends, and a newfound skill and appreciation for a sport that is not available to them at their high school, nor through the town (or any other towns in South County). Having the rowing program in North Kingstown is a huge benefit to high school aged students looking to row; the next closest programs are in Providence or southern Connecticut. It, logistically, would not be possible for my children to row if we had to commute to those areas.

Both of my girls are quite tall and at earlier ages were exposed to softball, basketball and volleyball. For whatever reason they didn't connect with those sports. Fortunately, they found OARS of RI and we are extremely grateful for it. I am happy to support this organization in anyway I can because it has been great for my children for the reasons listed above, and is run by good, caring individuals.

We have been impressed with the professionalism of OARS, emphasis on safety and proper technique, and their goal of creating a welcoming, fun environment for all student-athletes. OARS provides a service to the community that is not otherwise available, while striving to keep the fee to participate reasonable so as to allow equal access to the sport.

I support OARS' request for an exemption from property tax. Through their junior community rowing program, OARS forms kids into young adults and develops athletes who take pride in sportsmanship, fitness, commitment, teamwork, and discipline, and they change lives.

Sincerely,



Kevin M McGrady

401-338-9419 / kmmcgrady@aol.com

07/10/21

Jake Darsch

50 Ridge Dr

Exeter RI, 02822


To the Members of the North Kingstown Town Council:

My name is Jake Darsch ; I am writing a letter of support for OARS of RI. Both my children and myself have been participating in junior/adult rowing programs out of the OARS of RI boathouse at 166 Walmsley Lane for over 5 years. We are grateful to have this program, both my kids Sophia and Jacob have developed confidence, new friends, and a newfound skill and appreciation for a sport that is not available to her at her high school, nor through the town (or any other towns in South Kingstown). Having the rowing program in North Kingstown is a huge benefit to high school aged students looking to row; the next closest programs are in Providence or southern Connecticut. It, logistically, would not be possible for any of us to row if we had to commute to those areas.

We have been impressed with the professionalism of OARS, emphasis on safety and proper technique, and their goal of creating a welcoming, fun environment for all student-athletes. OARS provides a service to the community that is not otherwise available, while striving to keep the fee to participate reasonable so as to allow equal access to the sport.

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Sincerely,



Peter (Jake) Darsch

401-487-9972

jakedarsch@mac.com

July 11, 2021

Mr. Christopher P. Crowshaw
319 Post Rd
Wakefield, RI 02879

To the Members of the North Kingstown Town Council:

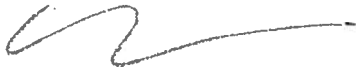
My name is Christopher Crowshaw and I am writing a letter of support for OARS of RI. My child, Alexandra, has been participating in junior rowing programs out of the OARS of RI boathouse at 166 Walmsley Lane for 2 years. We are grateful to have this program! Alexandra has developed confidence, new friends, and a newfound skill and appreciation for a sport that is not available to her at her high school, nor through any nearby towns, including in South Kingstown. Having the rowing program in North Kingstown is a huge benefit to high school aged students looking to row; the next closest programs are in Providence or southern Connecticut. Logistically, it would not be possible for Alexandra to row if we had to commute to those areas.

We have been impressed with the professionalism of OARS, emphasis on safety and proper technique, and their goal of creating a welcoming, fun environment for all student-athletes. The OARS program provides a service to the community that is not otherwise available, while striving to keep the fee to participate reasonable thus allowing equal access to the sport.

I support OARS' request for an exemption from property tax. Through their junior community rowing program, OARS forms kids into young adults and develops athletes who take pride in sportsmanship, fitness, commitment, teamwork, and discipline, and they change lives.

Please feel free to contact me at 401.439.2201 or via email at Christopher@neconstservices.com should you have any questions. Thank you!

Sincerely,



Mr. Christopher P. Crowshaw

July 11, 2021

Mrs. Carla Crowshaw
319 Post Rd
Wakefield, RI 02879

To the Members of the North Kingstown Town Council:

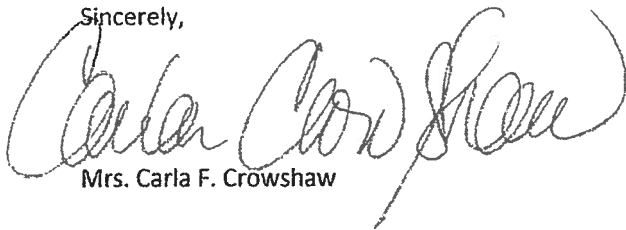
My name is Carla Crowshaw and I am writing a letter of support for OARS of RI. My child, Alexandra, has been participating in junior rowing programs out of the OARS of RI boathouse at 166 Walmsley Lane for 2 years. We are grateful to have this program! Alexandra has developed confidence, new friends, and a newfound skill and appreciation for a sport that is not available to her at her high school, nor through any nearby towns, including in South Kingstown. Having the rowing program in North Kingstown is a huge benefit to high school aged students looking to row; the next closest programs are in Providence or southern Connecticut. Logistically, it would not be possible for Alexandra to row if we had to commute to those areas.

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I support OARS' request for an exemption from property tax. Through their junior community rowing program, OARS forms kids into young adults and develops athletes who take pride in sportsmanship, fitness, commitment, teamwork, and discipline, and they change lives.

Please feel free to contact me at 401.486.7239 or via email at CarlaCrowshaw@msn.com should you have any questions. Thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carla Crowshaw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "C".

Mrs. Carla F. Crowshaw

7/14/21

Eileen Browning
26 Charles Street
North Kingstown, RI 02852

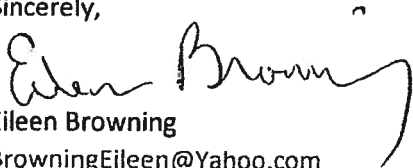
To the Members of the North Kingstown Town Council:

My name is Eileen Browning; I am writing a letter of support for OARS of RI. My daughter, Mae Browning, has been participating in junior rowing programs out of the OARS of RI boathouse at 166 Walmsley Lane for 2 years. We are grateful to have this program; Mae has developed confidence, new friends, and a newfound skill and appreciation for a sport that is not available to her at her high school, nor through the town (or any other towns in South Kingstown). Having the rowing program in North Kingstown is a huge benefit to high school aged students looking to row; the next closest programs are in Providence or southern Connecticut. It, logistically, would not be possible for Mae to row if we had to commute to those areas.

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Sincerely,



Eileen Browning

BrowningEileen@Yahoo.com

401/523-0780