

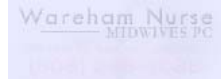
Wednesday, December 6, 2006

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Forecast / Radar



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OUR VIEW: Keith can be symbol of openness

School and city officials made the right decision last week to move children, teachers and staff into the new Keith Middle School the second week in December.

The two grades now attending the former Keith School will simply walk down the street to begin classes on Dec. 12 in the new school. The sixth-graders now attending several elementary schools will join them after the holiday break.

Several crucial projects will have been completed by Dec. 12 to be sure the cap covers the entire school property and the topsoil does not contain high levels of coliform or other contaminants.

Parents and staff can also be assured that a long list of scientific and technical experts have reviewed the building, the cap placed over the former landfill, the air quality and the grounds.

A study conducted over the summer months by Blue Wave Strategies and TRC Environmental Corp. concluded the cap over the former landfill eliminated health risks to people from polychlorinated biphenyls in the soil. The study found that the city had gone beyond what was needed in some cases to be sure that there would be no adverse health risk.

The review also recommended there be a clear, accessible system for routine maintenance and for public involvement in the future. The reviewers saved their strongest criticism for the way the city decided on the site for the new middle school with poor public communication and involvement at so many points in the process.

Mayor Scott W. Lang campaigned on a promise of opening up government and Keith must continue to be a symbol of his promise put into action. But he must also set up systems that go on long after he is mayor to be sure the school remains safe.

The school department and city government must come together to keep parents, staff and the general public informed about the regular maintenance and environmental monitoring of Keith.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency requires air tests in the new school every three months, but Mayor Lang has asked for monthly tests. The results of these tests should be regularly posted on the city website. The current website should be made as user friendly as possible. (The Keith information is now posted at www.ci.new-bedford.ma.us/McCoy.htm)

Scott Alfonse, the director of city environmental stewardship, said he would get the most recent air results on the Web site as soon as he can put them in readable format. He has also pledged to hold regular informational meetings on any new monitoring test results. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for January.

Anyone interested in getting on a mailing list for those meetings should contact Mr. Alfonse at City Hall at (508) 991-6188. There will also be public notices in The Standard-Times and on the city Web site.

None of the air tests in the Keith building and on the grounds have shown levels of contaminants that are of concern. The air tests that have proven troubling are those taken in New Bedford High School, which was built in the 1970s on a former dump that was not capped.

The city Board of Health should also ask its health director to become involved in monitoring health concerns at Keith and the high school, and working to inform the public. As Mr. Alfonse says, "The more eyes on this project, the better."

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for December 06, 2006

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Drawn Monday night 7352
Payoffs on \$1 bet exact order
4 digits \$4,710 3 digits \$659
2 digits \$57 1 digit \$6
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4 digits \$196 First 3 digits \$110
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- ▶ MASS CASH 3, 15, 21, 30, 34
- ▶ MEGA MILLIONS 6, 9, 13, 43, 46
The Gold Mega Ball was 45
- ▶ RHODE ISLAND DAILY NUMBER 2483

NEWS > LOCAL

- Business park on upswing
- Sutter brings in new team
- Suspect's competence unclear
- Mother of 5 slowly rebuilding life
- Yard waste pickup to change Dec. 15
- Cove St. neighborhood to hold holiday family night
- Women's Center seeks donations
- Cat adoption day planned for Sunday
- Seminar to cover Medicaid planning
- Man sentenced to life in caddie's murder
- Libraries to sponsor tree-trimming
- Republican committee sets meeting, schedule
- Acushnet's school funding moves toward resolution
- Regional leaders discuss economics with Patrick's transition team
- Heated issue
- Providing vision for learning
- court session
- Flu clinics offered by town nurse
- Tattoo parlor shows its heart with toy drive
- Oak Grove School project shrouded by question marks
- Marine center holds open house

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THE STANDARD POLL

How worried are you about the possibility of bird flu pandemic?

- Very worried
- Somewhat worried
- Not worried at all

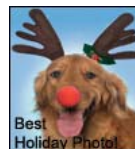
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