

MYSTIC NEWS

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Isham St. Right-of-Way Raises General Question

MYSTIC — Is there a public right-of-way to the river at the foot of Isham St. or isn't there?

Stonington Selectman Edward C. Coogan, Sr., a Mystic resident, has asked the town attorney for a legal opinion on the question.

Ever since Mystic Seaport bought property south from its former boundaries to take in part of the Isham and Bay Sts. waterfront, people on the east side have been asking the question, Coogan said.

He has received so many inquiries since the start of warm weather that several months ago he brought the matter to the attention of Town Atty. John F. Gallagher.

Although Attorney Gallagher recently resigned, Coogan said his report is expected at this week's Board of Selectmen meeting.

"For years, long before my time, Mystic people have launched and tied up their boats there. It was generally understood to be a public right-of-way," Coogan said.

The selectman feels strongly on the matter of public access to the water.

He intends to press for a town-wide survey to determine where historic rights-of-way are located.

Over the years many lanes of egress to the water have been closed to the public, he said, some through action of neighboring property owners, others through lack of identification.

"The town of Stonington is historically a seafaring community. It seems to me a shame that each year the ways to reach the water without resorting to a commercial facility get fewer and fewer," Coogan declared.