



TRURO
NON-RESIDENT
TAXPAYERS'
ASSOCIATION

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**Minutes of Nineteenth Annual Members' Meeting
Truro First Congregational Church Meetinghouse
Saturday, July 5, 2014**

Citing a quorum, **Regan McCarthy, TNRTA President**, opened the meeting and introduced existing board members to an assembly of more than 70 attendees. She also introduced guests, Jay Coburn, Chair of the Truro Board of Selectmen and newly elected BOS members, Maureen Burgess and Robert Weinstein.

The minutes of the 2013 Annual Members' Meeting, which had been distributed, were unanimously approved.

The current TNRTA Board officers will continue in their positions in 2014-2015.

In her remarks, **Regan McCarthy** spoke of TNRTA's continued role as a positive force in Truro, making a difference in local cultural, community and economic activities. For example, TNRTA Board members are active on several committees including the *Economic Development* and the *Bicycle and Walkways Committee* (BWWC). TNRTA also is active in regional issues, for example, in monitoring the *FAIR Plan Home Insurance* rate setting process at state level, where TNRTA has been aligned with and supportive of the Citizens for Homeowner Insurance Reform which helped defeat requests for "Fair Plan" Insurance premium increases and is now focusing on management of all homeowner insurance rates. TNRTA also made donations to numerous civic, health and cultural organizations on which non-residents and the entire community rely for assistance and enrichment.

McCarthy reported that Town government is in a period of change in various key areas. The untimely death of Town Administrator Rex Peterson leaves that position open while a search committee seeks a replacement. The building inspector Tom Wingard resigned and this essential role is being filled on a part time basis by Provincetown inspector Russ Braun, with some consideration that the position may remain a part time one. The TNRTA Board feels strongly this should be a full time position, as anything less could seriously compromise associated levels of review, enforcement, and due process.

The issues of building and development continue to be critical. There is general agreement that building size needs to be regulated in some way but no clear consensus has developed. Similarly, finding a balanced and reasonable path for promoting economic growth while maintaining Truro's rural character has been challenging. For example, the efforts to develop an "ABC" (asphalt/brick/concrete) at Winkler's on Rt 6 met vigorous opposition on many fronts from commercial and private abutters who were (and indicated they would be more) adversely affected by the operation. The activity was stopped and the permit request withdrawn, but it made clear that the Town needs workable definitions of light and heavy industry, with potential restrictions on heavy industry in Truro due to water and environmental concerns. In addition, it opens the opportunity to discuss economic planning based on a creative sense of what is possible for economic development (e.g., jobs which are related to green trades and industries such as information, telecommunications capabilities that enable such things as "work from home" jobs, thereby limiting impact on the environment while bringing sustainable and profitable business to Truro).

Attending members were appreciative of TNRTA efforts and communication and Town issues and information in Newsletters and emails and the TNRTA web site.

Chair of the Board of Selectmen Jay Coburn discussed the state of the Town and challenges ahead. He expressed his view of a government which includes everyone, whether year-round or seasonal resident. He believes that everyone wants Truro to remain a rural place with reasonable economic opportunity and a way for all to live affordably and comfortably.

He reported on some key personnel and budgetary issues. Town engaged a search firm to aid with hiring a new Town Administrator and there is now a short list of five from over 50 applicants. He expects results shortly. The Fire Department Advisory Committee has finished its study and recommended hiring a new Fire Chief, keeping a volunteer Fire Department with aggressive recruitment and training, and assessment of compliance with regulations around Town.

The Police Department added two new positions bringing the force to 14. In the last two years the number of cars has been reduced significantly. Drug enforcement – particularly related to heroin and hard drugs is a growing problem.

The Town prides itself on its fiscal management and has maintained nearly flat budget levels. Areas of concern are school budgets--particularly because of "Special Ed" requirements, and Town employee retirement pension benefit costs. With respect to school budgets, which are managed by a separately elected School Committee, there was a question whether it would help if school costs were within the management scope of the Selectmen and Town Administrator as well. However, this would involve Town Charter revision. There is at present a Charter Review Committee helping to define/redefine Town roles and responsibilities. It is not clear what discussion, if any, has come up regarding the School Committee.

The Town is looking to increase various fee-related revenues. In terms of future expense control, Coburn said Truro and neighboring towns are "seriously" discussing cooperation and collaboration around consolidated administrative and infrastructural services -- even including some aspects of police and fire/rescue.

Availability of affordable housing in Town remains an issue. There are approximately 20 affordable rental units and a handful of homes, but according to Coburn progress has been limited. With median home prices in Truro at \$600-\$700,000, Town workers cannot afford to live in Truro. As prices rise up and down the Cape, it becomes difficult for them to find reasonable housing at all. Town leaders are looking at some possible zoning changes or rental assistance as a solution.

Q&A and discussion from members focused on beach erosion on both the Bay and Ocean sides. A member suggested that the sand dredged from Pamet Harbor be used to replenish sand lost further out on the bay beaches. The erosion at Ballston Beach has been temporarily abated and there is some thought that restoring the natural tidal flow of the Pamet could help control erosion. However, whether ocean or bay, any severe storm or set of storms could undo efforts to control erosion or replenish beaches.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM

Submitted by:
Frank Korahais, Board Secretary