



TRURO
NON-RESIDENT
TAXPAYERS'
ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 324 • Truro • MA, 02666
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TNRTA NEWSLETTER

Fall 2008

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

I am sure it seems like an eye blink since we all enjoyed the pleasures of the summer in Truro, but the weather – occasionally down to the 20s already! – is a compelling reminder of how rapidly the seasons and life in Truro move on. Much has happened in the intervening months. Some highlights include:

- Two major capital projects of the Town have begun – the **Community Center** is well underway but has experienced a significant end-stage delay recently and **Puma Park** is complete (and fabulous).
- An **Online Assessors' Atlas** has been launched, which significantly enhances our ability to access information about properties in Town and it makes new types of information available.
- **Tax Assessments** for FY 2009 were completed, reflecting an increase from \$4.49 per thousand dollars of assessed value to \$4.74, a 5.56% increase over FY08.
- **Zoning By Laws Review** is underway, with a hope that revisions will be ready for Town vote in April.

- Multi-lateral discussions are underway among several Outer Cape towns (Truro, Wellfleet and Eastham) to engage in limited **shared services and cooperative ventures**. These could result in considerable savings and administrative streamlining in key areas over the next few years.
- Several prominent **properties in Town** remain subjects of dispute and discussion among abutters (e.g. the Kline property, Truro Adventures/Di Giovanni property) and raise important questions about future development in Town, including the recent subdivision of the Truro Safety Facility.
- And, oh yes, the economy went into free fall, even in Truro. As a result, significant cuts to the State budget have been made, some of which affect the Outer Cape (e.g. Outer Cape Health Services lost supplemental state funds that had been in this year's state budget). The local economy may not be the primary concern of non-resident taxpayers, but it has a profound impact on the stability and well being of the entire community and a direct impact on so much of what makes Truro, Truro.

More information on many of these items and others follows in this newsletter. Stripped of the details, it is our sense that Truro remains in good shape for this fiscal year as a result of a prosperous summer 2008 season for local businesses and a reasonable and defensible Town budget for this fiscal year 2009.

We will remain involved and active in relation to these and other emerging issues and we'll keep you posted by email if any urgent matter arises. In the meanwhile, please stay in touch and stay involved with TNRTA and Truro. Check out our website occasionally for updates. Feel free to reach us anytime at

tnrta@tnrta.org.

As always,

Regan McCarthy

STOP & SHOP - CHAPTER TWO

Many of us participated in the successful effort to keep Stop & Shop from building a 50,000 square foot building in Truro, a plan which S&S abandoned in 2001. Shortly thereafter, despite strong encouragement from TNRTA and others, Stop & Shop declined to take over the A&P site that became available in Provincetown. Instead the site was taken over by Grand Union, initially to high hopes that it would provide an improved quality of service and products for P'town and Truro residents. It appears Grand Union has given up the site. Much to our surprise, Stop & Shop seems to have re-visited its decision and will operate a supermarket at the same site.

Grand Union closed on Dec. 1. Ten day renovation effort will lead to re-opening on Dec. 12th under the auspices of Stop & Shop. In the interim, S&S will offer free shuttle service from the parking lot to

the Orleans S&S three times a day, and will re-train the majority of former Grand Union staff to serve as staff of the new Stop & Shop in P'town. It will continue to operate an in-store pharmacy as well.

We hope that Stop & Shop provides the quality of service and products that it offers in Orleans, and prospers as a result. We especially hope that it does not do what Grand Union did: use this site as an "odd lots" supermarket for products it could not sell at its other stores. Because S&S has many stores on the Cape, we hope this acquisition will result in both higher quality and lower prices than Grand Union offered. Stop & Shop's return to the area will then be a truly beneficial outcome of our work in 2000-1 to have S&S operate from an existing facility in Provincetown rather than build an unneeded mega-market in Truro.

What's Your Number?

A few years back, the Truro General By-Laws were modified to require that we post our street address on every building situated within Truro whether used for residential, commercial, industrial and/or any other purpose. Apparently, many of us still have not done so. This represents a safety hazard, as the street address is the means by which ALL safety and emergency vehicles are directed to our homes. So, the Town has asked us to remind all homeowners to affix their "street number" at a visible location - on your house or business and/or at the end of your driveway, if you can't see your house or business from the nearest road. If you do not know your street number, you can either get it on line at www.truro-ma.gov or you can call the Assessors Office at 508-349-7004 ext.15 or 17. FYI, the numbers should contrast with the color of the building or post, should be in a block typeface (no roman numerals or script please), and should be no less than 3" high and no larger than 12". For more information please check the Town Website for the General By-laws, or please call 508-349-7004 x27. It is fine to keep the "personal name" signs (e.g. Smith or Cozy Nook) as long as the street number is visible as well.

TOWN NEWS

Puma Park - Built For Community By Community

About 2 dozen children simply couldn't wait any longer: an hour before the 'official opening' of Puma Park, slated for 6 PM on Sunday October 26th, they charged through the paper "chains" and began to have the first of many fabulously fun times at Puma Park. This burst of excitement by the kids was the tail end of a four day festival of enthusiasm by the adults who built (and painted, decorated, and laid in) Puma Park from start to finish in the preceding days.

More than 850 bodies, including many repeaters over all four days of construction, showed up to do

But Next Door - A Big Delay

Completion of the new \$2.9 million Truro Community Center, slated to open in mid-October, has been indefinitely delayed as a result of two end-of-project snags. Progress on the construction of the site, next to the Truro Library and the new Puma Park, was moving ahead on target and on budget, until last minute reviews revealed two serious problems: first, the concrete slab forming the foundation of the building is not drying fast enough, prohibiting the installation of flooring; and more importantly, the open-rafter ceilings have been sprayed

with a foam insulation that is not flame-resistant, and without adequate flame-proofing of the insulating material, the building cannot be granted a Certificate of Occupancy. The Town is now in the unfortunate position of having to determine whether the architect or the construction company is responsible for the problem, and how to cover the \$60,000 cost for properly and safely flame-proofing the ceiling insulation. The Town Administrator, who had ridden herd on this project with great diligence, hopes to find a resolution quickly. It is with the lawyers – so it may take a while to work out. At this point, it is not known if the new Truro Community Center will be open by summer 2009.

the physical labor. They came from as close as the next road, and as far away as Japan. Some were skilled, including many of Truro and the Outer Cape's most talented and generous trades people and artists and many more were "unskilled" (as trades people), but very skilled in all the myriad tasks needed to make this process work smoothly - from staining lumber, to organizing and distributing tools, from setting up and taking down food pavilions three times a day to doing punch list tasks, from laying in wood chips to painting truck tires for play areas, and more. Food purveyors from all over the Outer Cape provided nourishment for 300 folks at a time as well.

Many non-residents came to Truro especially for this weekend, to participate in a

fun, heart-warming, and very productive undertaking. So when those children charged the "paper gates" before the official opening, everyone there was thrilled - it expressed what really pervaded the entire weekend: *what great fun!* The Park is a wonderful tribute to the spirit of community that built it, and to the community that will enjoy the Park for many years to come. Selectmen Curtis Hartmann and dozens of other folks took the lead in creating an opportunity that the Truro community as a whole seized and loved. TNRTA was pleased to support the project financially and on the ground as well, and congratulates all who contributed time, money and effort in creating Puma Park.



Other Development(s)

Both the Di Giovanni (a.k.a. "Truro Adventures") complex and the Kline property continue to move forward in litigation. The Town Building Inspector has recently approved permits for "reconstruction" at both sites. In the case of the Kline property, the Building Inspector determined that construction of the new 6500 square foot house was an extension of reconstruction of the existing structure on the property, which the Klins plan to renovate and simplify. Improvements to some sports facilities on the Di Giovanni property were also approved. Separately, abutters have challenged the development of both properties. In the case of the Klins, abutters challenge whether the Kline property has adequate and valid frontage.

Dexter Keezer Fund

While many of us are blessed with comfortable lives, Truro is home to many who are experiencing urgent financial and physical distress at this time, especially the elderly. The Dexter Keezer Community Fund, a tax exempt non-profit, was created to provide limited assistance to Truro residents in crisis. If inclined, please consider sending a contribution to the Dexter Keezer Community Fund, PO Box 572, Truro, MA 02666 For more info on the fund, check out www.keezerfund.org or see the flyer on the TNRTA website at www.tnrta.org.

this type of by-law. However, TNRTA has also requested that the Town develop a definition of "commercial" to be included in zoning by-laws. The Di Giovanni enterprise makes clear that there is a significant loophole in the Town regulations and that it is in the Town's interest to close the loophole through appropriate regulatory action. We were recently referred to the Planning Board on this matter and will take it up with that body.

Town's Use of ANR Subdivisions In late September, the Board of Selectmen authorized the subdivision of the Truro Safety Facility property for undisclosed uses, following the approval by the Planning Board of the subdivision on an "Approval Not Required" (ANR) basis. Both the BoS vote and the PB vote were divided, based upon questions of transparency, since ANRs free the property owner of informing abutters of intended and on-going development of parcels and may, according to some officials, free the Town of observing pre-existing conditions on this (or any other Town) parcel. While seeking and using ANRs are completely legal actions for all property owners, including the Town, it is optional for any property owner to do so. As the Town owns more than 100 parcels of land in Truro, the impact of ANR use could be far reaching. The relationship between private abutters is different than the relationship between citizens and their government. We can and should expect transparency from the Town, and an ANR by its nature grants a property owner the right not to be scrutinized by its neighbors. To understand the Town's plans and thinking, we have opened up a conversation with the BoS on the Town's use of ANRs, and on additional matters related to the impact of ANRs on this property. For more on TNRTA's view, see our website which displays a more comprehensive letter to the Provincetown Banner on this topic.

Zoning By-laws Review Underway

The Truro Planning Board has begun a process of reviewing the Truro Zoning By-Laws and hopes to have a revised and updated proposal ready for Town vote at the April 2009 Town Meeting. The PB is reviewing two central areas of bylaws: **Lot Coverage** and **Site Review**. Other areas of concern may follow in later proposals.

Lot Coverage is one of several factors used in determining both tax assessments and in establishing the limits of development in properties in Truro. At present, Truro uses the square footage of the footprint (length x width) of "impervious" (waterproof) structures such as houses and garages, paved driveways and patios, pools, and the like, to determine how much square footage of a lot is covered. If the PB continues to use this type of formula, it may propose a revised percentage of impervious square footage permitted on Truro properties, or it could add "pervious" fixed structures such as gravel driveways, or it could add or eliminate secondary structures (such as sheds) into the calculation. Alternately, the PB is studying "floor

Online Assessors' Atlas

Beginning in 2005, Truro began to capture aerial photographs of the entire Town as the basis for conversion to a digitized and on-line Assessors' Atlas. Mostly completed, you can now find the entire Assessors' Atlas online and available through the Town website at www.truro-ma.gov. Prior to this, the Truro Assessors' Atlas was annually updated through modifications to physical "mylars" covering areas that correspond to the main sections (or "sheets") of the Assessors' Atlas. Though our parcel IDs remain the same, these new

area ratio" formulas, which establish the cubic footage (adding in height as a dimension) as a basis for lot coverage. Many towns use "FAR" formulas in order to discourage (or encourage) "massing" (i.e. building up rather than building out).

Site Review determines the threshold or "trigger" [square] footage at which new construction and/or alterations are referred to the Planning Board for review. A key consideration by the Planning Board is whether or not to initiate Town-Wide Review. At present, site review is required for new construction or alteration within the Seashore District, that is, for the 210 privately held parcels within the CCNS. But site review is not required except under specific conditions for parcels in the Town district, that is, for the rest of Town. The Planning Board is studying the merits and implications of a uniform trigger for site review for all parcels of land within the Town of Truro, regardless of location.

Because the Seashore District has a minimum lot size of 3 acres while the Town district has a minimum lot size of 0.79 acres, both of these factors will have a significant impact on the future development of parcels throughout the Town. Importantly, introducing a "FAR" formula could be used to incentivize construction that keeps structures below the tree line, for example. Similarly, a uniform site review trigger could incentivize construction of more modest homes within the Seashore while not penalizing those smaller seashore homes which adhered to the "50% formula" voluntarily. In the Town district, it could relieve pressure on sensitive properties and reduce litigation among abutters by constraining mansions. Town-wide, it could make the entire review process more efficient and fair. But every modification has its trade-offs, which the Planning Board is thoroughly vetting.

TNRTA has been and will be actively involved in attending numerous PB meetings on this topic, in providing information and/or comments, and in educating ourselves on these issues. As a result, we are impressed with the complexity of these topics and with the seriousness with which the Planning Board is tackling them. We look forward to a preliminary review of the draft by-laws, and will update with specifics and our perspective at that time.

plans are altogether different and represent significant advances over the previous system. The underpinning is a set of aerial photographs of the entire Town, over which "planimetric data" - the location of known physical monuments such as roads and lighthouses - are laid in and all features are correlated to the Massachusetts coordinate system. This provides a much more accurate determination of the location and size of properties on the ground, based upon the most recent available data on official records. To check out the new online Assessors' Atlas go to www.truro-ma.gov. Click **Offices and Departments**, then click **Online Assessors' Plans and Property Cards**. You will come to a **Disclaimer** page which has a link at the bottom: **Click Here to View Assessor's Map and Data**, taking you to the home page for the James T. Sewall Co., contractor for these online plans. Click **Data Viewer** and you are there. You can start a **Search** (button on the upper right allows search by address, name, sheet & parcel number, etc). Make sure to add **Layers**, to get to the underlying photos, and adjust **Scale** to set your viewing frame. Have fun, and get to know your property and tax assessments in a new way!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TRURO!

The Truro 300 Celebration - Hold These Dates

Truro Tercentennial Committee reports that July 16, 2009 marks the day when Truro officially celebrates its 300th birthday and plans are underway for a wonderful celebration! So that the greatest possible number of our friends and neighbors can participate, the party will have three distinct elements:

- **May 3, 2009:** An opening ceremony including the dedication of a Commemorative path and circle (see next article).
- **Mid-July 2009:** A four-day weekend in mid-July including, but not limited to a concert and picnic on the Town Green, a re-enacted reading of the original proclamation that made Truro official - complete with costumes and a band, fireworks, a beach party with music, games and dancing and a fabulous parade and festival.
- **November 28, 2009:** A closing ceremony on Saturday, November 28, with a birthday party and dance to put the crowning touch on a special year.

Scattered throughout the spring and summer will be extra activities - a freshwater fishing tournament for kids, a golf tournament, arts and entertainment activities and lots more. Your ideas and involvement are welcome. To contribute an activity or event, please contact the event coordinator, Valerie Falk, at 508-349-3355 or e-mail her at valeriefalk@aol.com. And please visit T300 website at www.truro300.org.

Truro 300 Commemorative Circle

The Tercentennial Committee is developing a unique recognition project which may be of special interest to non-resident taxpayers who may want to place a permanent marker in Truro at this historical moment in the life of the town. The Commemorative Circle, to be located near the Library, will consist of a pathway made of inscribed bricks surrounding a stand of specimen native trees and marked with historical information which salutes Truro's history and people. You can have one or more bricks inscribed with your name, family name and/or other inscription, per the specs on the **form enclosed here on the reverse side**. Each brick is \$50, and can be ordered directly through the Tercentennial Committee a.k.a. Truro 300.



HOW TO ORDER TERCENTENNIAL BRICK(S):

Please complete the form below, and enclose a check in the amount of **\$50 per brick** (additional donations appreciated) and mail to: **Truro 300, PO Box 2030, Truro MA 02666**. Please provide an inscription for each brick ordered on a separate piece of paper and include with your order.



Name _____ Tel _____

Mailing Address _____

No. of Bricks Ordered (specify) _____ Enclose check in amount of \$50 x Number of bricks ordered

Inscription
 Max. 3 lines. 14 letters
 & spaces per line
 (List inscriptions for
 additional bricks separately.
 Please print clearly)



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**Please Contribute Your Experience and Skills!
 Join and Become an Active Member of TNRTA**
 Renew your membership today or become a new member. Send a completed membership form (enclosed below) with dues to TNRTA. Dues are \$35 per household annually. Contributions appreciated.

Name(s) _____

Permanent Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Truro PO Box _____	Dues	TNRTA Dues Enclosed: \$35
Truro Zip Code _____	*Contributions	To TNRTA: \$ _____
Truro phone _____		To TEEA Scholarship Fund: \$ _____
		Total Enclosed: \$ _____

*All contributions designated for the Truro Citizenship Scholarship Fund will go in full from TNRTA to TEEA



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