



TRURO  
NON-RESIDENT  
TAXPAYERS'  
ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 324 • Truro • MA, 02666  
www.tnrta.org • info@tnrta.org

# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

In the past few months, TNRTA has been busy and focused on many important matters, but two have taken priority: fiscal and zoning issues. These two issues capture the crossroads that Truro faces at this time, in our view.

From a budgetary perspective, the larger fiscal crisis in which the country finds itself echoes in its own unique way in Truro. As in other communities, anxiety over financial well being is high, yet the Town itself seems to be on a solid footing for the near term and hopefully, the longer term as well. Prudent management and sensible voter response to reasonable budget proposals are key to the Town's fiscal health. We are happy to report that in this regard, a strong voter turnout at the Annual Meeting signaled confidence, vigilance, and good sense, as most items that were adequately justified were approved. But voters also signaled restiveness over discretionary items (such as Town vehicles and overtime) and costs of completed capital projects. In this respect, we think the near term will not include requests for significant new capital expenditures. Residents - voters and seasonal alike - are also doing

longer-term comparisons of annual budgets over time and comparisons between Outer Cape Towns on operational costs (such as police), which will also shape future discussions on budget matters. TNRTA believes the proposed budget for FY10 was well-crafted and soundly vetted; voters agreed. The increase for this year is 3.6 percent overall.

At the same time, it is apparent that the Town faces a serious fork in the road on responsible growth and development. The decisions voters make in the coming year will irrevocably shape Truro: it will either develop fair, enforceable and Town-wide zoning regulations that permit reasonable but restrained growth and development, or it will become a sitting duck for developers and outside commercial interests who can and will take advantage of loopholes in existing regulations. The focus leading up to Town Meeting was largely on Beach Point, which recently faced enormous pressure from local developers to permit the construction of new cottage colonies and rapid condominizing of them which, if successful, would place significant environmental stresses on that area resulting

from construction and related septic and water system upgrades.

We are especially pleased that the voters rejected the worst elements of this effort, called for additional work on other zoning proposals, invited sensible proposals on lot coverage and town-wide site review, and opened up a serious discussion on the direction of development in the Town. TNRTA supported the efforts of a local citizens' group to inform voters on these issues, and the vote and turnout were gratifying. We are also working with others, including the Planning Board, to develop zoning bylaw proposals this year that will pertain to lot coverage and enforceable and town wide site plan review. We need to – and will – continue our focus on this timely issue.

More information on these items and others follows. We will remain involved and active on these and other significant issues, as always. And we'll keep you posted if any urgent matter arises. Feel free to reach us anytime at [tnrta@tnrta.org](mailto:tnrta@tnrta.org).

Best Regards,  
Regan McCarthy, President

## TOWN CABLE CONTRACT RENEWAL UNDER REVIEW: PLEASE SIGN AND SEND PETITION

At present, the only cable provider in Truro is Comcast. The Truro Cable Advisory Committee is presently negotiating with Comcast about renewing its license to provide services within Truro, and the license under consideration is for 10 years. Thus, the negotiation efforts will affect us for a long time.

Under Federal Communications Commission and Commonwealth rules, the Town may only negotiate on a limited range of topics concerning broadcast only -- and may not directly negotiate on

internet services, for example, or on plan rates. But as residents and consumers, we have options the Town does not have: we can use this opportunity to inform Comcast of our broader concerns and to signal that we expect more from Comcast if it is to deserve renewal of its license to operate in Town.

Our first concern is that not all parts of Truro are accessed by cable services. This leaves many areas of Truro with only satellite-based TV reception, which is subject to weather disruptions. And

significant areas of Town are limited to phone-up internet access, hampering the functioning of small businesses and individual service providers. Our social networks and public information searches are also profoundly limited by restricted internet access as well.

Second, Comcast has petitioned the FCC to close its Orleans Public Access Studio which provides so much of the community's public information programming on Channel 17. Without community programming, especially in a

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## CABLE PETITION (CONTINUED)

rural community such as Truro, the ability of the community to stay connected and informed is seriously hampered.

We'd like to ask you to support the Cable Advisory Committee's efforts to:

- **Extend the reach of cable to all homes and businesses** in Truro that may want access. The choice to acquire cable services (or not) remains with the consumer.
- **Demand expanded**, not reduced, **public access program capacity** ("PEG" programming) to serve Truro and the Outer Cape.

You will find a petition form on the last page of this newsletter. Make as many copies as you wish and obtain additional signatures if possible. **Please return your signed petition(s) no later than June 5** by EITHER:

- Returning it in the enclosed envelope (along with your TNRTA mem-

**bership renewal, if you have not already renewed).** TNRTA will forward your signed petition(s) to the Committee; OR

- Mailing your signed petition(s) **directly to the Truro Cable Advisory Committee** at PO Box 2030, Truro MA 02666.

The Committee will also hold hearings on this topic through early Summer to ascertain Truro residents' views on how well Comcast has fulfilled its current contract and how it will meet Truro residents' needs in the future. These hearings will be advertised and announced on the TNRTA website. The Committee will also accept written comments about cable access and services at the address above.

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## TOWN MEETING / TOWN VOTES

Truro's Annual Town Meeting was held on April 28th. In all more than 25 articles were presented for vote, the highlights of which are discussed here:

### The Budget for FY 2010

Voters passed the budget as proposed in the amount of \$15,109,847.28, representing a 3.86% increase over FY 2009. Discussion and comments were lengthy and extensive on targeted portions of the proposed budget: On *General Government Operating Expenses*, voters questioned the need for several vehicles - a police cruiser, vehicles for Town Hall and for the Recreation Department; the costs for Town Counsel; the costs for the Cable Advisory Committee (to cover taping of Selectmen's meetings aired weekly on Channel 17 - see related Cable article above) and the general increase in utilities costs. All were approved as proposed. On *Public Safety*, proposed overtime expenses were questioned, and the comparative costs of running the Truro Police Dept. versus the slightly larger police department in Wellfleet were raised. Proposed expenses for *Public Education* (Elementary and Secondary), *Public Works* (e.g. Dump), *Public Service* (Town Committees), *Culture and Recreation* (e.g. Library, Golf Course), *Debt Service*, *Municipal Benefits and Municipal Insurances* were approved without discussion.

Voters also approved specific articles of interest, including:

### Affordable Housing

Approval of \$160,000 to support the construction of an affordable housing duplex rental unit at 10 First Discovery Road. This represents the second rental duplex for af-

fordable housing funded by the Town (the first one behind Dutra's has recently been completed). A related article was passed at Town Meeting to grant to the Truro Housing Authority a parcel of 33,750 square feet (minimum lot size) subdivided from a 3.02 acre parcel formerly known as the "Burn Dump" off South Highland Road. Subsequently, the Town recently sought approval of the Planning Board for a 16 unit affordable housing cluster near the Library.

### Historic Preservation

Voters approved \$40,000 to inventory, survey and register public historic properties and for a public information seminar to inform residents about the procedure for and benefits of listing eligible private residences on the National Register of Historic Places.

### School Goes Solar

Voters approved a matching grant of \$70,000 (to be expended only if the grant from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative is received) to place solar panels on the roof of the Truro Elementary School. This is the first sustainable energy project funded by the Town, is expected to amortize in 10 years and save the Town upwards of \$170,000 per year in electric costs thereafter.

### Capital Projects

The voters approved three capital projects - for \$160,000 to replace vehicle *fuel tanks and related equipment*, to be located at the DPW compound; for \$75,000 for *DPW trailer at the Dump* to replace the 18 year old trailer at that site; and for \$155,000 to replace the 11 year old *ambulance* presently used by the Fire and Rescue Services.

### Zoning Amendment Approved

Voters closed a gap in the current by-laws by approving an amendment that would subject structures inside the Seashore to the same triggers for new construction and re-construction that apply to structures outside the Seashore district. Voters approved a by-law to require cottage colonies/motels/hotels to operate as such for three years before seeking conversion to condos. The vote met an exact 2/3 majority, was challenged, and has been referred to the Attorney General.

### Cape Electric Co-op

Voters agreed to give the Selectmen discretion to join the Cape and Islands Electric Cooperative as and if deemed of value to the Town.

## TOWN VOTES (CONTINUED)

Voters did **not pass**:

### Marijuana/THC Prohibition

In November 2008, the voters of Massachusetts approved decriminalizing possession of less than one ounce of marijuana and establishing such an offense as a civil infraction subject to fine. Subsequently, the Massachusetts AG's office encouraged local town police departments to propose that voters re-institute criminalization through Town Warrants. Other Outer Cape towns voted against this prior to Truro's vote. The vote on this article was "indefinitely postponed" with voter approval at Town Meeting.

### Animal Control

A comprehensive animal control, treatment and licensing by-laws was proposed and rejected largely on the basis of its alleged failure to distinguish between the treatment of farm animals and domestic pets.

### Zoning

An amendment to limit cottage/condo size did not pass nor did a proposal to establish a cap on "visual bulk" (i.e., based on a formula establishing surface area of structures). The cottage size limit was modified on the floor in a manner that was unclear; the visual bulk proposal was rejected due to its propensity to encourage flat roof construction. The proposal to define "Half Story" was "indefinitely postponed" due to problems in the presentation of a modification from the floor.

The Town meeting covered a wide range of issues, and generated lively debate. The Zoning by-laws discussion was both highly energized and very instructive. The voters' responses on the one had were thoughtful and forward-thinking and yet they demanded well-constructed proposals. The zoning amendments that failed did so for the most part on technical issues, not on the merits of the

positions they proposed. Our sense of the discussion is that Town voters are ready to address reasonable and enforceable zoning by-law revisions that will preserve the character of the town while respecting owner's rights on a uniform basis. At the same time, developers did not receive encouragement, and the momentum to protect Beach Point seemed to increase as a result of the discussion. The Planning Board and Selectmen received clear signals that voters expect the process to continue. As promised, TNRTA will help that to happen.

### TEEA Scholarship Recipients

TNRTA members contributed \$500 this year to the TEEA Scholarship Fund set-up by Truro Neighborhood Association. This year's outstanding scholarship recipients from Truro are:

**Katie Silva** is a National Honor Society member, Class treasurer, and Member of Human Rights Club. Katie's first community service was at age 6, helping the victims of the Red River Flood in SD and continues to today helping with AIDS Support Group, beach clean ups at Herring Cove, and after school help. She is planning to attend Johnson and Wales University.

**Clementine Dunn**, who maintained A+ in 4 AP courses and 9 honors classes, is a member of National Honor Society, Interact Club (a community service club) and many volunteer activities (Nauset Cares Day, NOAH Homeless Shelter's Telethon Fundraiser), afterschool tutor, helped raise money for WOMR, donated to a charity art show. She spent the past year as a Goodwill Ambassador living in Finland.

Please consider contributing to this scholarship fund when you renew your membership in TNRTA this year. Thanks!

## TRURO TERCENTENNIAL UPDATE

For seven months, beginning May 3 and continuing until November 28, Truro's 300<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration has activities and entertainment for everyone. Visit the [www.Truro300.org](http://www.Truro300.org) website for a full calendar of events. The Truro Historical Society, Castle Hill Center for the Arts, the Payomet Center for the Performing Arts, and the Truro Public Library have partnered with the Truro Tercentennial Planning Committee. Each partner has a full program of events as well and you can link to their programs through [www.Truro300.org](http://www.Truro300.org).

There is still time to leave your mark in the **Truro 300 Commemorative Circle** by placing

a permanent marker for yourself or your family in Truro. Located between the Library and the Community Center, the Truro 300 Commemorative Circle consists of a pathway of inscribed bricks surrounding a stand of native trees and historical information that salutes Truro's history and people. You can have one or more bricks inscribed with your name, family name, or other inscription. Each brick is \$50, tax deductible, and will be enjoyed for generations to come. Order forms are available at the Truro Library or at the [www.Truro300.org](http://www.Truro300.org).

TNRTA is sponsoring the Tercentennial Programs at the Payomet Theater throughout this entire program season, and has also contributed directly to the Town's Tercentennial Programs as well. The Payomet has a wonderful tribute program this year, recognizing and presenting interesting and varied works covering a wide swath of time, and including works of many of Truro's most illustrious washashores and seasonal residents.

We hope you take full advantage of the many offerings the Truro Tercentennial Committee has pulled together for this remarkable commemoration of Truro's history.





## Town of Truro

### Residents' Petition for Improved Cable Service

As Comcast is the only provider of cable services in Truro at this time:

I, the undersigned resident of the Town of Truro, hereby express my strong support for:

- Town-wide availability of cable service to all residents and businesses
- Improved and expanded Public, Educational and Government ("PEG") Access including a locally-available PEG Access Facility.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Truro Address \_\_\_\_\_

Do Cable Services Reach Your Truro Neighborhood? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return by June 5th** either with your membership renewal to **TNRTA** or directly to **Truro Cable Advisory Committee** at PO Box 3030, Truro MA 02666.



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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 \_\_\_\_\_

Truro Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Truro phone \_\_\_\_\_

Dues	TNRTA Dues Enclosed:	\$35
*Contributions	To TNRTA: \$	
	To TEEA Scholarship Fund: \$	
Total Enclosed: \$		

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

