



TRURO
NON-RESIDENT
TAXPAYERS'
ASSOCIATION

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

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012

Letter from the President

Dear Neighbors,

For many reasons, this year has been one of unexpected changes in Truro, starting with the climate: while winter 2011 was hard on Truro, winter 2012 was practically balmy, with little snow or rain, and generally above average temperatures. So, Spring arrived early, with those living things that can do well without water coming up first and strongest. It has been a long, slowly unfolding green season so far, full of simple beauty all around.

The Town has seen many changes at the most senior level of staff and officials.

Curtis Hartmann, chairperson of the BoS, has returned to private life (and some rest!) after 6 years on the BoS and 5 years on the Planning Board. We are grateful for his long and generous service. Voters elected a new member, Jay Coburn, who brings energy, enthusiasm, and an considerable skills to the position and re-elected Jan Worthington as well, who indicated one of her priorities is positive relations between seasonal and year round residents. Voters also re-elected John Pendleton to the Planning Board. Others elected committee members (School, Library, Housing, etc) remain in place. Congratulations and thanks to all!

Voters quickly and easily passed a budget of \$15.9 million (compared to \$15.5 million for FY2012), representing a 2.7% increase over last year's budget. While the school budget increased substantially, other departments' costs savings achieved an essentially flat budget. Tax rates will likely increase, though the actual tax rate may not be known until September, when State approvals of assessed property values are expected to be complete.

Look for new leadership in Town offices as well. Two valued senior staff retired this Spring – Meg Royka, Library Director, and Linda Maloney, Assessor. We extend our thanks to them and our welcome to their successors, Tricia Ford (Library) and Belinda Eyestone (Assessor). Chief Kyle

Takakjian is well settled in his new role overseeing a confident police department. We also have gained a new Beach Supervisor, Steven St. Clair, who brings

long experience and fresh eyes to the position. Notably, beach regulations concerning pets on the beach in summer months will be enforced at each town beach by Beach Dept. staff, relieving beach users of this annual ambiguity. Rex Petersen, our new Town Administrator, has ably and openly led all of this with efficiency and grace.

Major issues facing the Town in the coming months include an historic re-organization of the Fire Department management structure, the scope and impact of a proposed county-wide waste water management authority and related initiatives, coastal dune management and erosion mitigation, and the ever-moving balance between preserving and protecting Truro's rural character and beauty and permitting coastal development and the development of light industry in Town. Look, too, for more signs in front of local businesses - the Town approved placement of *Open* and *Welcome* signs during business hours as a

way to generate business at retail operations in Town. Recent Court decisions on several major property disputes have important implications for the Town regarding definitions in our zoning bylaws and authority of Town bodies and offices. On another zoning front, all candidates for BoS remarked that they were in favor of some form of house size regulation, a matter which the majority of voters has consistently supported over the past several years. We remain optimistic that a carefully crafted proposal based on broad input can be crafted and adopted in the foreseeable future.

More information on these and other items of interest can be found inside. Please feel free to contact us anytime at tnrta@tnrta.org with your views, concerns, and questions and to check our website occasionally for updates at www.tnrta.org.

Best Wishes,
Regan McCarthy, President

TNRTA ANNUAL
MEMBERS' MEETING
July 7, 2012 at 10 AM
Truro Library

TNRTA members again contributed generously this year to the TNA Scholarship Awards. The 2012 winner, **Bridget Kinahan**, is an honors student at Nauset Regional HS where she is a member of the National Honor Society, the Honors Chorus, the Green Club and other school societies. Bridget was selected twice to participate in the All-State Chorus, contributes to the Nauset Literary Magazine and performs in the school's musical productions. Bridget will major in Women's Studies and Vocal Music Performance at Brandeis University this fall. She intends to be the first Truro diva (at least the first to perform at the Met!).
Thank You!

Town Meeting / Town Vote

Truro's Annual Town Meeting was held on April 24th. The highlights of Town Vote on the 27 articles proposed follow here:

- **The Budget for FY 2012 – Voters passed the budget in the amount of \$15,915,854.43**, representing a 2.7% percent increase over FY 2012 (approved at \$15,496,766 last year). This modest increase reverses the slight reduction achieved in FY 2012 over FY 2011. Voters again flew through the budget and related articles this year and the Omnibus Budget passed without contention. Three Prop 2 ½ overrides were approved on May 8th, agreeing to further increase the tax rate for several large capital projects needed by the Town and described below. Only a few budget items merited any discussion: Questions were raised about the creation of a reserve fund for the costs of accrued sick and vacation time of retiring employees; about the apparent increase in technology costs, an artifact of consolidating costs formerly in several departments into one aggregate budget; about the costs of required GIS services for fly-overs to maintain accurate assessor's plans; about the increased costs for school services, in part related to cost of services for special needs student(s) in the district; and about the recovery of costs related to replacement of the police cruiser destroyed in a car accident last fall, which cost recovery was complete and thus replacement had no impact on the budget.

Voters also approved specific articles of interest, including:

- **Fire Dept Re-Organization** – For voters, this article was the only seriously debated article at ATM. Voters approved an historic change in the structure and oversight of the Truro Fire department by first authorizing that the Fire Chief be appointed by the Selectmen rather than the Board of Fire Engineers. It further called for new rules to prevent the Fire Chief from serving on any multi-members bodies that oversee that position; and it will require a change in the Town Charter to eliminate the Board of Fire Engineers, already reduced this year from 7 members to three. This vote leaves Provincetown the only Cape fire department that has a Board of Fire Engineers managing its fire-fighting services.
- **Land Use/Zoning By Laws** – Voters approved five articles related to land use. A change to the sign code will now allow retail businesses to post “Open” and “Welcome” signs [2 x 3 ft flags] during business hours year round, including on double-sided road signs. They adopted a new definition of “building height” to more precisely and consistently define the term when applied to different building styles. Voters approved re-classifying a portion of the Beach Point area from Knowles Heights Rd down to High Head Road along Rt. 6A as part of the North Truro Limited Business District. This classifies both sides of the road consistently but effectively renders a substantial swath of private undeveloped land developable for multi-unit structures (e.g. motels) and at a greater density than was previously permitted. Voters also approved management of three “open space” town properties by the Truro Conservation Trust at no cost to the Town. Voters also refreshed an article approved last year permitting a land swap to provide the Town with 15 acres adjacent to the Truro Elementary School. The associated State legislation was not

filed in its 2011 session and must be re-submitted this year with current voter approval.

- **Capital Projects** – Voters approved \$59,000 for a new GIS fly-over for assessment mapping; \$42,000 for a new pickup with plow or the DPW; \$40,000 to pave the upper portion of the parking areas at Truro Elementary School; \$20,000 for engineering and plan preparation to forestall erosion at Noon's Landing; \$31,731 for replacement of a police cruiser damaged in a single-driver accident in the Fall 2011, the replacement costs of which were fully covered by various insurance fees. Voters also approved three overrides of Prop 2 ½ for capital projects: \$150,000 for a front loader for the DPW; \$300,000 for the certification and capping the landfill at the Town Dump; and to borrow \$150,000 for engineering and construction needed to restore tidal flow and drainage at Eagle Creek. Voters also approved re-appropriation of unexpended funds from FY 2011 to complete the construction of the bunk room at the Public Safety Facility and storage closets for the Community Center. Total new capital projects approved by voters will cost \$893,875 including overrides.
- **Agriculture Committee** – Several years ago TNRTA urged the Town to develop a green economy, especially encouraging the expansion of micro-agriculture on small farms and in private gardens. Under the leadership of eager citizens, this movement has grown to such an extent that the voters approved the creation of an Agriculture Commission to represent the Truro farming and market gardening community.
- **Affordable Housing/Tax Exemptions** – Voters approved two related articles: One permits the Town to file special legislation to exempt all properties (or portions thereof) rented affordably in Truro from local property tax; the second refreshes an article passed in 2007 by voters that was not filed for legislative approval. This vote may incentivize cluster-unit development of affordable housing in Truro, a model which has had mixed results in Provincetown. The second article exempts accessory dwelling units made available for affordable housing from local property taxes. It passed previously but was refreshed this year as it must be approved by the state legislature before it comes into effect. Voters also approved \$50,125 from Community Preservation Act Funds as a reserve for affordable community housing.
- **Financial Management Articles** – Voters approved 3 articles related to management of Town finances: one established a “sundown clause” in the general bylaws permitting the Town to either let projects expire (and return funds to the budget) or extend the timeframes for approved projects; another created a Tuition Revolving Fund (est. \$40,000) to enable the acceptance of tuition payments by out-of-district students attending Truro Elementary School; and the third created a \$50,000 Retirement Reserve Fund to cover unanticipated costs of retirement resulting from unused, contractually-obligated accrued sick and vacation time.

• **Historic Preservation** – Voters approved another \$120,500 for three projects: \$38,500 for a feasibility study to restore and preserve Highland House Museum; \$75,000 for engineering, assessment and repair of the bell tower, steeple, and other parts of the First Congregational Parish Historic Meetinghouse; and \$7000 for administrative costs of the Community Preservation Committee.

• **Opposing Extension of Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station Operating License** – Voters overwhelmingly approved that the Town deliver a resolution to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to deny the 20-year extension of an operating license sought by this facility and to copy this resolution to the Governor, Attorney General, and federal and state legislators representing Truro.

Voters did not reject any article on the Warrant for Annual Town Meeting this year.

Town / Regional News

BoS Selects Our Fire Chief

Last Spring, the TNRTA newsletter reported on the selection of the Police Chief. Now, big changes are in place for selection of the Fire Chief. Based on an independent consultant's review in 2011-12, the Selectmen determined that the existing structure was outmoded and untenable, and proposed a number of changes. This resulted in a hotly debated article, passed this year by voters, which places responsibility and authority for selecting and overseeing the Fire Chief in the hands of the Selectmen and will result in the eventual elimination of the current Board of Fire Engineers structure in a few years. It may also begin a transition to a quasi-professional (i.e. paid) department in the future. Whatever the Fire Department structure may become, we greatly appreciate the generosity of those Truro residents who have long volunteered their time - and risked their lives - for the safety and protection of Truro by serving in the TFD.

Progress on Homeowner's Insurance

Attorney General Martha Coakley took up the inadequacy of the "hurricane models" that underlie the FAIR plan's proposed 7.2 % rate increase for the Fair Plan this past winter. TNRTA supported her position actively. TNRTA and others in the Homeowners' Insurance Reform coalition have long argued that these models relate to hurricane-prone parts of the country and utterly fail to reflect the limited hurricane and wind damage scenarios of Cape Cod. The Fair Plan is also in a positive cash position and does not need the rate increase.

On May 11, the MA Division of Insurance denied the FAIR Plan rate increase. Equally important, Coakley issued a statement saying she was pleased that the Division of Insurance recognized that insurers were using questionable hurricane models to push for higher rates. Nonetheless, private insurers reportedly may seek higher rates, in part because of damage from non-hurricane Irene.

The Courts Weigh In – Recent Court decisions may lead to needed changes in Truro's zoning and building regs. Three court rulings on the **Kline House** led to the Town's January 2012 tear down order, now deferred pending additional Court clarification as to whether "tear down" was in the scope of the Court's meaning and the ZBA's purview. Similarly, Courts found **Truro Adventures** was operating a commercial business in a residential area and it must stop "marketing and renting their property for the purpose of having those renters host large gatherings and weddings." These rulings raise important questions about how we define *alteration*, *road*, and *commercial*; and whether our current definitions pass legal muster.


PAYOMET needs volunteers to assist with productions this summer and all year round! So if you have the bug for music and theater, and want to see great performances from a new vantage point, **call 508-487-5400 or email info@payomet.org** with the subject line: **Volunteering.**

Regional Authority – Barnstable County recently made two proposals of importance to Truro. First, it proposed creating a **county-wide Waste Water Management Authority (WWMA)**. This recommendation grows out of a multi-year effort by the Cape Cod Commission and the Water Resources Collaborative to find solutions ahead of the prosecution of two lawsuits (between the Feds and environmental groups) to compel clean-up of toxic wastewater from Otis AFB into Cape aquifers. In addition, Falmouth, Hyannis, and other larger towns are facing pressures to develop new sewer systems. The hope was that a locally developed countywide plan (rather than a court-ordered plan) would result in better regulations and lower costs. The proposal received fierce opposition from residents of 9 Cape towns opposed to absorbing the sewer and treatment costs of other towns and the anticipated imposition across all County "ratepayers" of taxes for waste water management. Further, settlement negotiations in these lawsuits collapsed in early May 2012. TNRTA urged Town officials to put this issue on its radar and to become engaged, and this has since become a priority of the BoS. For Truro, a small town relying largely on private wells (and not on municipal water/sewer systems), the impact of a countywide authority could be significant and expensive, but could also afford an opportunity for active engagement from the beginning on a matter having broad consequences for the region.

At the same time, County Commissioners also proposed to **dissolve the Assembly of Delegates**, a body in which each town has an elected representative. Originally urged by the Business Round Table many years ago, which expressed frustration at being unduly hampered by local zoning and building regulations, a bipartisan commission on governance made this proposal to replace the Assembly with a 5- to 7- member panel to be elected countywide. If adopted, **Provincetown, Truro Wellfleet, and Eastham would be represented by one delegate.** Together with the WWMA, this may portend a scenario of taxation without adequate representation for Truro.

**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.

 <p>TRURO NON-RESIDENT TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION</p> <p>P.O. Box 324 • Truro, MA • 02666 www.tnrta.org • info@tnrta.org</p>	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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