



TRURO
PART-TIME
RESIDENT
TAXPAYERS'
ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 324 · Truro, MA · 02666
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NEWSLETTER

Spring/Summer 2018

Letter from the President

In writing to you for the first time as TPRTA's new President, I want to start by introducing myself. I have been a Truro property and homeowner since 1991, and an active member of this association and Board since 2009. I served as Vice President for the past several years. I have also served on the Truro Bike & Walkways Committee for many years as a member and as Chair. As a retired civil engineer and land surveyor, I hope that my past professional experience is a benefit to Truro and to you all. And I hope my life as an artist keeps me receptive and always aware of the beauty around us in Truro.

I assume this position from our longstanding President, Regan McCarthy, whom I must thank for help and assistance in my transition to become the new President. She has made the process seamless - thank you! Now, I am eager and ready serve in this position.

Even though Truro is in our hearts all year long, your focus may have been elsewhere during the off-season. As usual, we were here paying attention, listening to part-timers, connecting to our neighbors and friends, to public and elected officials, and to part-timer associations in other Cape Towns. We are prepared for an active 2018 and look forward to meeting with you soon at our Annual Meeting.

2018 - A Year of Firsts

Because this is my first time writing to you, I've been struck by how much else is also "first-time" in Truro. There's a lot, and all of it will be discussed in more detail in this newsletter.

Budget Firsts

Most important is the budget approved at ATM: the budget approved is a whopping \$19.4 million with an additional set of overrides amounting to \$600,000 bringing Truro's budget for the first time to exceed \$20 million. In addition, voters agreed to a set aside \$1.84 million in unspent funds for retiree health insurance costs and a variety of other rainy-day projects.

The budget had another first: it was not

discussed at all by voters. In a first-ever move, voters supported a motion to vote on the omnibus budget without discussion and the subsequent vote took less than two minutes. For part-timer resident taxpayers, who did not get to vote in this decision, this is our only opportunity to ask questions about the Town budget. Nor did the substantial number of voters who also had questions. The opportunity to discuss the budget was especially important this year because the RTE shifts obscure actual tax impact. **In essence, about 17% of Truro's full-time residents/voters made this sweeping decision for the entire town.** All the more reason to consider registering to vote in Truro.

New Name

The Board of Selectmen will now be known as the Selectboard, a more gender-neutral term.

Election Firsts

While veteran Selectswoman **Jan Worthington** was re-elected with 376 votes, the big winner was **Kristen Reed**, a Truro resident since 2009, whose bid for the Selectboard is her first-time seeking public office. She won with 450 votes, making her the first to get that number of votes, the first to be elected to the BoS with no prior experience in Truro public service, and the youngest in recent memory as well. The new BoS Chairman is Bob Weinstein. We wish them well.

New Uses

This year also saw Truro's first efforts to establish legal establishments to grow and sell both medical and recreational marijuana in Truro. Voters declined to grant the Town a moratorium on starting-up till the fall in order to develop zoning bylaws, so some processes will begin right away under current regs. The town also established a first sales tax - on retail sale of pot at 3%.

Voters finally passed a position we have advocated for years: to allow conversion by condo associations to year-round condo provided they meet existing regulations that protect water and the environment and meet all health, building, environmental, safety

TPRTA ANNUAL MEETING 2018

July 7, 2018 – 10 A.M.

First Meeting House, Town Hall Road
Truro, MA

Please join us for refreshments to follow.

and other applicable codes. **Waste water management - not water use - is the major area yet to be addressed.**

New Rising Tides

Downtown Truro flooded five times this winter due to storm surges and other areas of the town had their predictable storm stresses. Voters approved \$100K to expand flood mitigation analyses for the Pamet River Valley, running from Downtown Truro to Ballston Beach.

Truro's New Part-Time Residents' Committee

The BoS has created a new standing Town committee made up of 7 part-timers - who were vetted by the BoS over the winter - will meet to discuss issue of concern to part-timers. Ostensibly, this was created to get more "diverse views" - as if hearing from nearly 800 participants in public meetings and communications over the past two summers was not diverse enough! Go figure. By law, committee members must observe Open Meeting Law. Neither the committee or its individual members represent anyone - they speak as individual citizens only. They will begin meeting this summer, TBD. TPRTA Board Members will be actively participating, though we encourage all part-timers as individuals to do so, as we always have.

This is especially true this summer - notwithstanding the Selectboard's indifference to the overwhelming opposition to the RTE, we simply have to continue in making it very clear: we are an important part of the fabric of this community - there is no getting around part-timers (or TPRTA, for that matter), nothing to be gained by misusing our money or goodwill, and no hope we will be silent.

First Year Under the RTE

FY 2018 is the first year in which the Town's newly adopted - and extremely controversial - Residential Tax Exemption (RTE) is in effect. The full impact of the RTE is

somewhat obscured because of the financial reckoning and budgeting involved in first-year implementation. More on this topic follows, but all part-timers should know that **we have done a lot of work over the past year on this topic and will give you updates at the TPRTA Annual Meeting in July.** Much to tell, much to consider and much to do, if that is the will of part-time resident taxpayers.

You will find more on these issues in a bit more depth inside. We expect and hope to have another lively Annual Meeting in which we go deeply into the most pressing of these issues, especially those around taxes, the RTE and what to do about these. I am sure 2018 will continue to bring surprises, but

one thing is not new: Our view remains that we are One Community of neighbors and friends. We are happy to pay a fair portion of the taxes and fees needed to keep the Town beautiful, well-equipped and well-staffed and to sustain it as a safe, secure, healthy, livable and beautiful rural Town for all who call their properties home no matter how much time they spend here. We encourage patronizing, eating, shopping, and giving locally, and we do so generously. We actually don't expect much - it is enough to be consulted, heard, respected, and treated fairly.

Time to enjoy the beauty of the spring, summer and fall seasons in Truro. In these coming months, I hope we can restore Truro

to being one community where taxpayers are all treated the same and fairly. We all love Truro's beauty and hope to treasure it as the last truly rural Town on the Cape through the admiration and cooperation of one solid community sustaining it for future generations.

I look forward to getting to know you better and to seeing you at our Annual Meeting on July 7, 2018. Please mark your calendars - **we have many important matters to discuss.** I am always available and can be contacted anytime through TPRTA email at tparta@tparta.org.

Best Wishes,
Cathy Haynes, President

Town News

High Places

This year, a cooperative of growers and retailers joined forces to create *High Dunes*, Truro's first efforts to launch legal establishments to grow and sell both medical and recreational marijuana in Truro. In recent votes, Truro resident largely support this effort, but many understand that how to do this is not yet clear. A number of other towns have struggled with this issue, most often with community support. The Town went to the effort of drafting the moratorium article to give Truro six months to draft zoning bylaws to cover all the requirements of the law and to study the issues involved. The Town's efforts to gain approval for a six-month moratorium were shattered by outgoing Selectman Jay Coburn, who moved to indefinitely postpone the article, purportedly wanting to avoid (another) difficult discussion at ATM. This effectively mean is these establishments can begin applications and seeking Truro to "host" the entities- even in the absence of bylaws to govern their placement and operations. We understand the Town intends to draft a set of essential draft zoning articles for vote at a Special Fall ATM that will cover the very particular harmonization with state law while trying to avoid a collision with federal laws. With 70% of Truro in federal land - and the Feds not allowing any of this - this may take some doing One toke over the line - oy!

Year Round Condo Use Approved

Our position over many years was that condo use should be allowed year round, assuming condos meet zoning, building, health safety codes and other zoning requirements. It was again a hot topic on this year's ATM, but this time with a different outcome: it passed overwhelmingly by 221

(yes) to 55 (no). While this year's article still has some flaws - and the serious problem of wastewater management on Beach Point remains a major concern environmentally - there are stronger protections in the new zoning bylaw for condos and abutters.

For condo-owning part-timers, year round use is not automatic. There are MANY steps required, the first of which is that the entire association has to agree to convert to year round use, to change its bylaws and its covenants with Truro. This may also mean changing deeds in some instances. Then there is the process of making the entire association conform to septic and other zoning requirements, including building codes for winterization. For those in vector flood zones, it may be necessary to lift condos. In other words, there is a lot to learn, to discuss among condo owners and your associations, and to do to make this work well for you. We urge those who want to make this change to get sound legal advice and to learn about and follow new requirements.

One other aspect of this is important. Truro sets assessed values of properties on "market" rates based on recent sales. Condo sale prices in Truro have been lower because of part-year use. Once condos are converted to year-round use, the market will catch up fast and values will likely increase in 1 to 2 years after conversion is completed. Then taxes will rise with that, along with speculators and developers seeking to purchase. In this respect we disagree with all the rationalizing that year round condo use will make some Truro housing stock more affordable. Not likely, when the median price for cottage condos is already over \$400K with only part-year use. But getting to enjoy Truro year round is surely a great thing!

Round 2 on the RTE

The Residential Tax Exemption must be

approved this year as part of the annual tax classification hearing. Now that we have a year of the RTE under our belts, the central question we face this year is this: do we continue to actively oppose the RTE or do we drop opposition? This is an important decision we must make this summer.

Some basic things to keep in mind:

First, only 13 towns out of nearly 380 in MA have adopted the RTE. Most have not. Why? Because it creates more problems than it solves and it truly divides communities. Exceptions like Cambridge are rare, and succeed because they have multiple tax rates, a strong commercial sector to bear the largest brunt of the taxes (so the "residential" tax shift is proportionately small), and Cambridge has multiple tax revenue streams, including a very significant "Pilot" ("payment in lieu of taxes") contribution from the major universities there. NONE of these pertain to Truro.

Second, it WILL increase. Provincetown had this RTE before Truro and in 2018 P'town Selectmen want to raise the RTE rate to 23% - by law it can go to 35% - while Wellfleet's recent Selectman elections had four of 5 candidates calling for a "split tax" - that is, the RTE.

Third, of the 553 full-timers who obtained the RTE in FY 2018 a large number come from the wealthiest members of the community. Really? The distribution of wealth - at least as implied by assessed values of homes - charts nearly identically between full and part-timers. That means we are not so different

CONDO SNAPSHOT FROM TRURO:

- 3133 residential parcels in Truro
- 536 condo units
 - 291 on Beach Point
 - 245 in other parts of Truro
- 563 motel/hotel rooms

economically. **Should part-timer resident taxpayers of modest means actually and directly subsidize the richest full-timers in Truro?** Our proposed alternatives to take care of those who really need tax relief without tax giveaways to Truro's wealthiest have been ignored for a full year. These would offer the same level of relief – and bonus round- with the State picking up some of the tab, so part-timers don't have to. PS: The number of abatements subsidized by the state dropped by more than 2/3, as full-timers shifted to the easier-to-obtain RTE. The total value of abatements rounded the corner of \$500,000 in FY 2018, the vast portion of which came from the RTE and was shifted onto part-timers.

Fourth, our portion of the tax burden for Truro is reaching stratospheric levels – with nearly 90% of the taxes and fees collected coming from part-timers as a result of the added RTE tax shift. **We agree with the BoS that property taxes – including the RTE - are regressive and should be avoided.** But now, between budget increase and the RTE, they are more than regressive, they are oppressive and should be reversed. Finally, as Senator Cyr noted at ATM, the **Short-Term Room Occupancy Rental Tax** – a pass-through tax collected from renters - is likely to pass through MA Senate and House reconciliation this summer. If passed, he noted this could bring upwards of \$400k per year to the Town. While he advocated saving these monies for the future proposed "\$14 billion wastewater plan" for the Outer Cape, we'd like to see these funds go to reduce property taxes for everyone, and particularly, to eliminate the RTE. Maybe this - in addition to the pot sales tax and other new tax revenue streams - could replace the RTE entirely.

Land Topics

Voters had a few land related articles to consider, and one generated a lively debate on the floor: Article 14, Acquisition of State Property, authorized the Selectboard to acquire from Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MASSDOT) a parcel of land now utilized as a portion of **South Hollow Road** between Route 6 and Shore Road. The Town Manager mentioned that the Town requested this from the MASSDOT as preliminary plans to improve the intersection of Route 6 and Shore Road are being developed. Concerns included the possible use of the property for parking and to eliminate use of South Hollow as a roadway. This street and the surrounding area have been a topic of great debate over on-street parking practices around Truro Vineyards. An amendment to the Article was proposed such that the use of this acquired

property must be voted at a future town meeting. We look forward to the discussion of keeping as a town road, or potential and beneficial uses of this property.

New Driveway Access Rules

Article 13, passed at this ATM, now requires approval of **driveway access** to public roads prior to the issuance of a building permit or occupancy permit. The approval is required and must be obtained from the Department of Public Works and will need to meet Chapter 1, Section 9 of the Truro General Bylaws. It was not clear if this article was related to any of the controversy regarding on-street parking in that area of Town, as mentioned above.

Vote in Truro

TPRTA continues to urge all eligible persons to vote in Truro. Why is this worth considering? One word: balance. Help restore balance to Truro. Help restore a community where everyone's voice is equally respected, Register to vote, and have your voice heard. A united Truro is a stronger and better Truro.

We have received questions on what "eligible" means. We have clarified this with the State, and have gotten confirmation that this is accurate:

Registering to vote is a declaration of "home." We are not lawyers and are not giving legal advice, but as we understand it "home" is where you "eat and sleep" at the time you vote and where you intend to make your home, at least for the time being. It does not have to be permanent or forever and there is no time criterion in Massachusetts law. But if the Town were to challenge an individual voter registration, it would look at evidence of intent to make Truro the center of your civil and domestic life. Evidence could include driver's license, telephone listings, address on tax filings, etc. As we understand it, a voter may go away for extended periods, for example on sabbatical or rent out his or her home, and not lose the right to vote where registered. In other words, if Truro is your home and where you intend to make "home," you have a right to vote in Truro even if you are not always in Truro. Keep in mind "one man, one vote" applies in Massachusetts and

nationally: you can only vote from one residence even if you own and occasionally occupy more than one property.

If you intend to register to vote in Truro, please use the State's online form at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/OVR/Welco.me.aspx>. You can complete the application online, print, sign and return it to the town clerk - a fast, easy way that makes processing by the Town Clerk simpler. **If and when you register:** please let us know if any member of your Truro household has registered to vote by sending an email to us at tpрта@tpрта.org. Thanks!

New Police Chief

The Select Board endorsed Capt. **James Calise**, from the Warwick, R.I. police department to fill the post vacated by Police Chief Kyle Takajian who retired in June 2017. The new chief will be the head of our 14-officer department. We wish to thank Craig Danziger for his outstanding service as Acting Chief of Police, and look forward to working with our new Police Chief, who we welcome and wish every success.

Unbeatable Opportunities to Go Green

TPRTA, working with our sister orgs in Provincetown and Wellfleet, have been working with Outer Cape Energize to make sure part-time residents know about their SOLARIZE program which has special offers available until August 8th. They are hosting free informational meetings in Truro this summer to learn about incentives, rebates, discounts and more on solar panels, energy efficient appliances and more. Look for a flyer TPRTA has sent you about this important program in the mail or learn more at OuterCapEnergize.org. Cape Light Compact is offering a no-cost home energy assessment that comes complete with FREE air sealing, energy-efficient light bulbs, efficient shower head, and faucet aerators. You can uncover generous incentives and rebates at CapeLightCompact.org.

TRURO SCHOLARSHIP WINNER FOR 2018

TPRTA members generously supported and fully funded this year's Citizen's Scholarship Winner, annually awarded by TNA/TEEA. The full scholarship of \$1,500 was awarded to Penelope "Polly" Watson. Polly is truly a home grown success story: while she has spent much of her life helping others as a Peer Mentor and has been involved from age 10 with Sustainable Cape's Children's Community Garden, she is also quite accomplished as well: Polly testified to Congress for the 2018 Farm Bill, is a member of the National Honor Society of Peer Mentors, and was an exceptional student, garnering admission Harvard University in the Fall. Polly also enjoys fly fishing, field hockey and track. We are pleased to recognize and support the continuing life path of such a capable and compassionate young woman. We appreciate the hard work of TNA/TEEA in selecting Truro's brightest each year and are grateful for TPRTA members' long-term and continued support of this program.

Join TPRTA or Renew Your Membership Online at www.tprta.org
 OR: Send a completed membership form with dues to TPRTA. Dues are \$35 per household annually.
 Contributions appreciated. Thank you!



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Name(s) _____

Permanent Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Truro PO Box _____

Truro Zip Code _____

Truro phone _____

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

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

Contact TPRTA at

Email: tprta@tprta.org ♦ Snail Mail: PO Box 324 | Truro MA 02666 ♦ Web: www.tprta.org

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