



TRURO  
PART-TIME  
RESIDENT  
TAXPAYERS'  
ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 324 · Truro, MA · 02666  
tprta@tprta.org · www.tprta.org

# NEWSLETTER

Winter 2018

## Letter from the President

Writing to you at this time of year always reminds me to be thankful for what we have in Truro and to write in the spirit of the season - bearing gifts of good news and good tidings for the New Year. As I write this on a stunningly cold New Year's Eve day in Truro at the end of a starkly beautiful holiday week, the first part is easy. But the second part is a bit more challenging this year.

Part of the challenge is that this letter will be my last as president of TPRTA. Today is the last day of my term after 12 years in this position. Tomorrow starts a New Year and a new day for TPRTA leadership - and one I am very optimistic about.

### A New TPRTA President

When I became President in 2005, I promised to do it for one year. LOL! I announced my intention to step down as President in 2015, and the Board began a transition process that has put us on very solid footing. We have a **skilled and knowledgeable incoming President, Cathy Haynes**, who is committed to ensuring TPRTA continues to serve our community for a long time to come. Cathy is active in Town civic and cultural life, well-respected, fully versed in Town governance, and has served on our Board and Executive Committee for many years.

We have **very skilled Board members** including a mix of new, energized members and exceptional Board veterans. This gives us depth, balance, perspective and sustained experience. We have earned your confidence and trust in our ability and commitment to serve as your collective voice in Truro - and this confidence and trust are stronger than ever. TPRTA leadership is in top form.

Most importantly, because of you we have created a **solid and engaged membership**, which gives us options, resources, and impact. We have also **created a movement for tax fairness** that will grow with the cooperation of other organizations like ours. We are a **permanent, integral, generous and very large part of this community**.

This will be true for our lifetime and many generations to come. So, I can make this transition now because I know we are solid, as is TPRTA. We are simply off to a new and exciting chapter together, full of opportunity and challenge!

### Where We Are Now

I have rarely expressed my own views in speaking for TPRTA or with you. Either I represented what you have expressed - no matter how diverse (or contradictory) your views have been - or I have expressed the considered opinions of the Board on matters we have studied in depth. But for my last "President's Letter" I will offer my own, personal view of the current state of the union in Truro. Simply put, in my view it is **frayed but repairable**. That "BUT" entirely depends on whether our full-time neighbors listen to and respect our concerns and believe we understand and address theirs.

### Time for Neighbors to Talk Directly

In other words, it is time for neighbors to talk. Unfortunately, we cannot rely on the current Selectmen or town management to help with that: the majority of the current top leadership do not care about part-timers' views. This was made painfully obvious when the expressed written and spoken views of nearly 800 individual part-timers over two summers who overwhelmingly opposed the RTE were dismissed, miscast and disregarded. This small group of officials care about our money and appear to see us as the Town's bank.

I do not believe Town staff hold the same view - we are blessed with a remarkable crew of experienced and committed Town staff who serve all of us with consideration and skill. Nor do most Town voters, though from my perspective, they are in a quandary.

This is in part because life in Truro is truly challenging for many of the elderly, working families and young people who are trying to build a modern, vibrant Truro that at the same time maintains its natural beauty and rural character. The vast majority of Truro's year-round residents can afford life in Truro, but some of those upon whom they rely - some tradespeople, small business owners and non-profits - are economically stressed. The main driver of stress is a seasonal economy with limited, seasonal jobs. Lack of mid-market level purchase and rental housing stock is a serious problem for working-income level residents in Truro and the Outer Cape. Yet Truro has a relatively low level of native poverty that does not justify low income "40B" affordable housing to the extent it has been touted. Such housing will not take care of Truro's real housing needs and will likely result in long term financial costs to all taxpayers as well.

### Community Housing Needs Are Real

If Truro has a housing crisis it is for "community housing" - for folks with 100 to 120% of AMI (adjusted median income, or about \$72K-\$86K) who cannot afford to buy and cannot find places to rent. We were among the first to name the actual problem - for real community housing solutions (such as accessory dwelling units) for middle- and

### COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Discuss Reasonable House Size Limits Town Wide with Planning Board**

**Come to a Community Forum at the Truro Library**  
Saturday, January 20 | 2-4 pm or  
Tuesday, January 30 | 6-8 pm

**TRURO + Outer Cape Towns  
"Go Green to Save Green"**

New program offers deals, incentives and info to adopt solar, other green energy options in next six months.

**Learn more at [outercapesolarize.org](http://outercapesolarize.org)  
Check TPRTA website for updates**

fixed-income residents. I hope we continue to support development of other kinds of community housing. Truro should also get creative and work with the State to develop “regional 10%” standards for 40B housing that Outer Cape towns can jointly address and benefit from.

Many support year-round condo use as a way to achieve affordable community housing needs. In my view, year-round condo use is a right, but it has as much potential to make Truro less affordable as it does to make Truro more affordable for working folks because of the already inflated condo values in Truro. It will not make a dent in the “affordability” issue. The draft article under consideration for vote in April makes it clear just how difficult it will be to accomplish conversion to year-round use due to legal, regulatory, insurance and environmental reasons. Waste water management will also be extremely difficult in Beach Point, an especially sensitive area. These factors may have largely depressed year-round conversion, if approved.

“Affordable housing” is the third rail of political issues in Town, having now become an ideological litmus test. It is also conflated with other unrelated issues, like year-round condo use, multiple family dwellings and the myth of a self-sustaining Truro micro-economy. It also distracts from the central opportunity we should and can seize: to encourage small business development in sectors that will preserve the Truro environment - like green or digital services - and to work toward regionalization of public services and community housing development on the Outer Cape where feasible. This is a conversation that must be held without fear or favor because it will have such an impact on the character, economy and environment if the Truro community gets this wrong.

### Threading the Needle

So how do we thread this needle? In my view, we need a **citizen’s group made of full and part-timers** who can speak directly to each other and who can in good faith and with good will try to gain support for alternatives that will truly address local needs for tax relief, develop housing and jobs on a regional level that will make it possible for folks to live here and nearby sustainably all year round, and that will also be fair and equitable for the three quarters of the Truro taxpayers - us - who inject the vast majority of revenues and energy into the local economy, who largely pay for Town services

without comparable benefit, and who truly call Truro their heart’s home.

### One Community, One Truro

During my time as President, our organization has unwaveringly stood for and worked hard to develop and create a “one community” spirit reflecting our diverse full- and part-time resident community. We have generously supported local non-profits, encouraged participation on Town committees and local volunteer programs, and led the way on key issues, from *Stop the Stop & Shop* to being the earliest advocates for “green and blue” business in Truro. I hope we will always support that view. To promote a new dialogue in light of the division resulting from the Selectmen’s adoption of the RTE, my hopes are pinned on **One Truro**, a group of full and part-time residents who are working together to gain passage of a generous Town-wide house size cap consistent with the one adopted for the Seashore District in 2017. If this dialogue succeeds, it may lead to a wider and more far-reaching conversation as well. I expect you will hear more from them this winter.

### GOP Tax Revisions Hit Part-Timers

The GOP tax bill passed in December will have a big impact on part-timer resident taxpayers in Truro and elsewhere because it has eliminated the tax deduction for our local property taxes. It compounds the increases due to the RTE, perhaps doubling the tax impact for us in 2018 and beyond. This could have a significant impact on many of us, especially the majority of us who are of moderate means. At some point in the not too distant future, this *will* also adversely affect Truro’s businesses and will trigger downward pressures on the Town budget – even the wealthiest in Town start to spend less when hit with multiple thousands in increased expenses. It will also effect full-time residents, and the double whammy of increased taxes and decreased income will not help them. Recent tax changes should trigger a new discussion about an equitable way to distribute the changing tax burden in Truro and restrain budget growth. The RTE should not be in the mix because it is unfair, discriminatory, inequitable, and there are better alternatives.

### The Vote

Until this year, my personal view was that part-time residents should not vote in Town, even if eligible, because we have a voice - TPRTA – that is respected and trusted. But

the RTE discussions changed my view in two ways: first, **the RTE is lawful but awful**: by dint of the State law, the BoS has a right to vote it in and to impose it on us without our assent. Four Selectmen made this decision in opposition to 98% of part-time voters and about half of full-time voters. But they are elected officials. We should have a say in electing officials who now have the power to tax us without representation.

Second, I and hundreds of others witnessed close-up the cynical and utterly **non-transparent process** in which Selectmen could ignore the overwhelming opposition to the RTE, expressed individually or collectively via TPRTA, and win the participation of owners who would benefit from the RTE regardless of need. Stripped of the details, it is effectively a tacit form of vote buying that part-timers pay for in cash and in disenfranchisement at the ballot box. The selectmen “heard” us as required by law, but only one Selectman truly listened. But more disturbing, the current pro-RTE Selectmen ridiculed, mischaracterized and defamed those who most vocally opposed the RTE. This was unwarranted, unprecedented and unacceptable.

This is why I changed my mind on voting in Truro. We cannot allow ourselves to be vilified or disrespected, only be to be treated as tax serfs. Nor can we sustain a long-term divisive argument with our full-time neighbors, who had little to do with this decision in any case. This was an official decision, and that is where we need to focus and have an impact. We should help full-timers understand the corrosive and adverse effects of the RTE on us and Truro, which facts were never presented to full timers by Town officials. We should try to win the hearts and minds of our neighbors and always help anyone in need in Truro. But plain and simple, we should not have to rely on our full-time neighbors to protect us in the ballot box, as much as we might want it.

I am now convinced that those who are eligible and able should be encouraged to **register to vote this year and going forward**. We also now need to take on the longer campaign of changing State law, so that Massachusetts joins the nearly dozen other states that allow this statewide. For that we will also need Massachusetts residents to use your votes in other parts of the State to get your State legislators to support such reform. The registration form is enclosed. Find more info on the form and TPRTA.org. **If eligible, please register.**

**Facts Are Our Friends**

In a time and place where facts are simply “alternatives” of unequal authority meant to be used to justify what one wants or demands, we face an especially tough road as the non-voting majority of property owners in Truro. TPRTA has worked long and hard to be a fair broker, to represent facts in an accurate way and to be respectful of others’ views, even when we hold divergent views from our neighbors or our elected and appointed officials. Not everybody else operates the way we do - and not everyone wants TPRTA around, though the RTE process has convinced me that TPRTA is more necessary than we could have imagined a few years ago. I hope we continue to be fair brokers and attentive, cooperative watchdogs. This way, we can encourage and join in intelligent and civil discussion and ensure we have a transparent government in Truro.

**The \$464,000 Question**

At the present level of application (now approved for half of full-time properties), the RTE will cause a tax shift of about half a million dollars onto part-timers. And that is with the rate at 20%. But one Selectman is

already calling for it to be increased to 35% reaching as much as \$1.48 million or more if fully adopted based on FY2018 assessments.

I do not see a “right” or simple response to the RTE. I know what it is: taxation without representation and a tax giveaway because it is not needs-based. Brewster had it right when they rescinded it, correctly calling it the **“Screw Your Neighbor Tax Act.”** I know that Tisbury tells a cautionary tale: their Selectmen rescinded it, but never acted on that decision because the part-timers stopped making a stink. I know that the problem resides first in the State law that establishes the RTE and second with the very few Towns that take it up. And I know that some full-timers truly need tax relief. In my view, they should get it. Our good alternatives have still not been considered.

But I also know that we come here to enjoy Truro, not to fight. We want to be at the beach, not Town Hall. Opposing the RTE (and the contemptuous treatment we received in opposing it) are worthy – perhaps non-negotiable - undertakings. Since I no longer have the juju for this campaign, I cannot ask anyone else to do it. But I can ask: **what’s just, what’s fair, and what is our dignity worth?** If the answer is

“to raise hell” so be it. If it is “not as much as peace” - then that, too, is in your hands.

**It’s Been Swell**

I offer these last personal thoughts for your consideration, to nourish some of your own thinking, conversations and actions, and to pass on the benefit of my long service in Truro. Use them or ignore them as you wish.

It has been an honor and a privilege – sincerely - to have been President of TPRTA. As I become Past President on the Board, I will always do what I can to be helpful to you and Truro. Please support Cathy as she takes on this mantle in the New Year - it is a lot of work - and send her your ideas about how to make TPRTA ever more effective and constructive as your collective voice in Truro at [tpрта@tpрта.org](mailto:tpрта@tpрта.org).

Thank you for your unwavering support and clear guidance over these many years. I am especially grateful to my fellow Board Members - a conscientious, considerate, fair-minded and smart set of champions for Truro and its part-timers.

Best wishes and regards,  
Regan McCarthy, President

**TPRTA CHANGED OUR FISCAL YEAR  
ALL DUES PAID IN 2017 APPLY TO 2018**

**All Part-Time Resident Taxpayers in Truro Will Receive Free Membership in 2018**  
Please update or activate your memberships so we can keep you informed and hear your views easily.

Online | At the TPRTA website | Membership <https://tpрта.org/membership/>

On Paper | Complete and mail the form below to  
TPRTA | PO Box 324 | Truro MA 02666

We never share or sell your email or personal information.

Contributions appreciated. Thank You!



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**FOR 2018**

Update only if info has changed.

Activate online or by mailing this completed form to TPRTA.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Truro PO Box \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

|                 |                           |     |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-----|
| Dues            | TPRTA Dues Enclosed:      | \$0 |
| *Contributions  | To TPRTA:                 | \$  |
|                 | To TEEA Scholarship Fund: | \$  |
| Total Enclosed: |                           | \$  |

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

Print all information in black ink. Follow above instructions for proper delivery.

# Registering to Vote in Truro

If you own or co-own a home, it is simple to change your voter registration to Truro.

Complete the form below and return it to Town Clerk at Truro Town Hall by mail or in person.

Truro Town Hall  
PO Box 2030  
24 Town Hall Rd  
Truro MA 02666

M-F 8AM – 4 PM  
508-349-7004 x 113 or 114

For detailed instructions and more information visit <https://tptra.org>

|    |   |   |  |   |
|----|---|---|--|---|
| 1  | <b>Check one:</b> Are you a Citizen of the United States of America? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No NOTE: If you checked "no," do not complete this form.   |   |  |   |
| 2  | <b>Full name:</b><br><i>Miss Ms. Mrs. Mr.</i>   | <i>last name</i>  | <i>first name</i>  | <i>middle name or initial</i><br><i>Jr. Sr. II III IV</i><br><i>(circle one if appropriate)</i> |
| 3  | <b>Former name:</b><br><i>Miss Ms. Mrs. Mr.</i>   | <i>last name</i>  | <i>first name</i>  | <i>middle name or initial</i><br><i>Jr. Sr. II III IV</i><br><i>(circle one if appropriate)</i> |
| 4  | <b>Address where you live now</b> ( <i>street number / street name / rural route number &amp; box number / apartment number / city or town / zip code</i> ):  |   |  |   |
| 5  | <b>Address where you receive all your mail</b> (if different from #4):  |   |  |   |
| 6  | <b>Date of birth:</b> <i>month day year</i>   | 7 <b>Identification #:</b> <i>license # or last 4 digits of SSN</i> | 8 <b>Telephone (optional):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Check if unlisted</i> |   |
| 9  | <b>Party enrollment or designation</b> (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Democratic</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Republican</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Libertarian</i><br><input type="checkbox"/> <i>No Party (unenrolled)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Political Designation (not a political party):</i>   |   |  |   |
| 10 | <b>Address at which you were last registered to vote</b> ( <i>street number / street name / rural route number &amp; box number / apartment number / city or town / zip code</i> ):   |   |  |   |
| 11 | If the applicant is unable to sign this form, give the name, address and telephone number (optional) of the person helping the applicant:<br><i>name</i> <i>address</i> <i>telephone number (optional)</i>  |   |  |   |
| 12 | <b>I hereby swear (affirm)</b> that I am the person named above, that the above information is true, that <b>I AM A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES</b> , that I am at least 16 years old and I understand that I must be 18 years old to be eligible to vote, that I am not a person under a guardianship which prohibits my registering to vote, that I am not temporarily or permanently disqualified by law from voting because of corrupt practices in respect to elections, that I am not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction, and that I consider this residence to be my home. Signed under the penalty of perjury. |   |  |   |
| 13 | <b>Today's date:</b> <i>month day year</i>  | 14 <b>Signed:</b> <i>Sign your name here.</i>                       |  |   |

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