



TPRTA ANNUAL MEETING 2019

July 6, 2019 | 10AM

MEETING HOUSE, Town Hall Rd, Truro

Letter from the President

Mother Nature was kind to Truro this winter with minimal flooding of the Pamet River & lower than normal snow amounts. We are easing into spring with an abundance of rain and are looking forward to the warming days of summer.

Once again, this past off-peak season has been an intense period for Truro, as we continue to address issues key to increase the availability of full year housing and to acquire lands for Town use. Most of these are reflected in the recent votes at All Town Meeting (ATM), described in detail inside. The meeting was attended by 270 people, of whom about 247 were voters, **13% of the 1894 registered voters** reported in the May 2019 Election Results Report.

Perhaps most important from ATM this year is the approved expenses of the Town: **exceeding \$26 million with overrides and debt exclusions**. At All Town Meeting (ATM) on April 30th, voters approved a **FY 2020 budget of \$20,089,615**, a 1.94% increase over FY19 budget of \$19,703,732, with roughly \$6.5 million in added overrides and debt exclusions for land purchase and capital projects.

A small but vocal group of voters expressed strong concerns that the escalating budget and the increasing taxes are untenable for Truro. The vast majority of the 247 voters attending felt otherwise and approved both the \$20 million for the budget and two large cost items that increased the town budget even further. A debt exclusion to **borrow up to \$5.1 million to purchase the Walsh property**, 68.9 acres of mostly undeveloped land located south east of the Truro Central School along Route 6 and another of **\$1 million to repair the culvert pipe at Eagle Neck Creek** (Old County Road at Mill Pond Rd) passed easily.

The Walsh Property purchase was the subject of lively debate at ATM, contrasting the unique opportunity for the Town against concerns over a major purchase without a use plan and with escalating taxes. Voters raised the same concerns at ATM that part-time resident taxpayers expressed to TPRTA. Carefully weighing the pros and cons as we listened to the positions expressed, on this matter, **we believe the voters made the correct choice**, for many reasons we explain in detail below. For starters, the purchase in partnership with the Truro Conservation Trust along with the possibility of using the monies available through the Dennis settlement (on Kline) could reduce actual costs to the town by almost half.

Most central to our support was the commitment to have full community involvement in planned use of the property and that such uses would be subject to vote. Before the ATM, Selectmen Worthington met informally with full and part-time residents (including us) who strongly supported the Walsh purchase on condition that the plan(s) for use would be developed by the community in an open process and that the proposed uses would be confirmed by vote at ATM next year or as soon as feasible. Admirably, Ms. Worthington took these views back to the Select Board and a revision to the article was made to ensure that a committee of citizens would be appointed to lead a public process starting this June and requiring Town approval by vote at a future Town Meeting. We will be actively involved throughout and encourage interested individuals to do likewise.

As Truro's town budget continues to escalate, we recommend accelerating the pace of in-depth studies and discussions

to determine the cost effectiveness in regionalizing services in an effort to stabilize taxes. In 2018, Town officials received a report by the Matrix group on its preliminary investigation of shared services with Provincetown and also began to explore regionalization among the four Outer Cape towns (Eastham to Provincetown). These are great steps toward achieving excellent services while reducing the tax burden on property owners in Truro.

The town's diligence is laudable, though taxpayers have yet to see a formal set of recommendations on regionalization. We urge Truro to realize the urgency of reducing the budgetary burdens on all of us by utilizing regionalization options. We also suggest that Truro emphasize shared services with towns whose property character is similar to Truro's. This would allow for more options in regionalization in keeping with the character and scale of most Outer Cape communities. At the same time that Truro's tax-driven obligations are rapidly rising, it has several new revenue streams: proceeds from the Short-Term Rental Tax (estimated at \$450,000/yr.), from the new excise tax on property transfers (est. at \$350,000/yr.), and the Kline settlement fund of which more than \$600,000 has been received with eight more years of payments arranged. In other words, these new revenue streams project \$1M/yr in additional revenue. This represents an amount equal to about 5% of the FY'20 budget. Perhaps a tax reduction is in order?

There is much more inside on ATM, the Cloverleaf project (North Truro affordable housing), the second RTE surcharge on part-timers and more. For continuing up-to-date information, **sign up for our "as needed" e-newsletter**

and read timely posts on our website at www.tprta.org.

As always, please feel free to contact us anytime at tprta@tprta.org with your tips, views, concerns, and questions.

Best wishes,
Cathy Haynes

A Bumper Crop of Scholars

This year, the generous support of TPRTA members made it possible for TEEA to offer scholarships to five worthy Truro residents heading off to college. All are in the National Honor Society and all have been involved in multiple volunteer activities in Truro ranging from the Truro Farmer's Market or beach clean-up to local cultural activities and helping seniors with home tasks. They also show a wide range of interests and aspirations for life going forward. **Julia Keane** will major in Political Science at Clark University. **Carmen Roderick** will major in liberal arts at the Univ. of New Hampshire. **Jack Silva** will attend Plymouth State University, majoring in Criminal Justice with a career in Law Enforcement as his goal. Cousin **Shane Silva** will attend the Univ. of New Hampshire to major in Homeland Security, joining the Army ROTC Program to commission as an officer after graduation. **Gordon Winkler** will study chemical engineering to research and develop new sources of energy for the auto industry.

We wish these fine students every success in college and in life!

Annual Town Meeting Votes

The Omnibus Budget and Other Spending - Highlights of the Vote on 17 Warrant articles. Voters approved the following articles on budget and costs:

- FY '20 Municipal Operating Budget of \$20,089,615 with amendments to the FY '19 budget allowing transfers to other allocable activities including to stabilize the FY '20 tax rate

Transfers from the Capital Stabilization Fund

- \$21,000 for replacement of heating and cooling "splits" in municipal buildings
- \$170,000 to replace Truro Central Elementary School boiler

Transfer from the General Fund

- \$71,988 in pharma subsidies received from the CC Municipal Health Group transferred to the OPEB [Open Post-Employment Benefits] Trust Fund

Debt exclusions

- \$5.1 MM for the Walsh property and \$1 MM for the Eagle Neck Creek repairs and improvements (Old County Road at Mill Pond). In year 1, these will result in tax increases of \$146 for a median-valued property (median value is \$618,000).

Approved Community Preservation Act Articles

- \$56,434 for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- \$40,000 for the Cloverleaf Project predevelopment expenses
- \$125,000 for Edgewood Farm's restoration and preservation of three historical buildings
- \$204,000 for Highland House Museum continued restoration including an elevator
- \$28,148 for the administrative expenses of the Community Preservation Committee

Home Rule Petition Articles | Require passage by the MA legislature

- To introduce a property transfer excise tax of 0.5% (one half of one percent) on buyers of property in Truro. This is estimated to yield \$350,000 in new revenues based upon last year's total value of sold properties. These will be split equally between the capital improvement stabilization fund and the affordable housing trust fund.
- To authorize the Town to apply to the General Court (Legislature), if the Town desires to do so in the future, to expand the 5C RTE to part-time taxpayers' residential

properties if they choose to make their properties available for rental to year-round residents. More on this below.

Other Articles:

- **Voters passed Article 9** setting the COA Revolving Fund spending cap at \$40,000
- **Voters passed Article 10**, to allow expenditure of Highway Assistance Act reimbursement funds, estimated at \$170,312
- **Voters passed Article 17**, a non-binding advisory action to establish a Climate Action Committee
- **Voters declined** to pass Article 16 which proposed to use secret voting at Regular and Special All Town Meetings.

The actual tax rate will not be known until the tax classification hearing is completed in August/September, the number of full-timer applicants for the 5C RTE is settled, and the State approves the tax rate thereafter.

THE CLOVERLEAF PROJECT MOVES FORWARD - COMMUNITY INPUT BEGINS

Highland Affordable Housing hosted its first community discussion on the proposed project on May 16th. HAH specifically requested the participation of TPRTA and part-time resident taxpayers in contributing to the community discussion, which we appreciate greatly, being longtime proponents of multiple approaches to providing housing within financial reach of Truro's residents, especially seniors, young entrepreneurs, and working families. **To learn more** about that meeting and future plans for community input, **visit the TPRTA website (www.tprta.org)**, as they were not available at the time of printing this newsletter.

As we previously reported in the TPRTA e-newsletter and on our website in January, the Select Board gave the green light to develop a 41-unit affordable housing project at the 4-acre parcel adjacent to the Highland Road ramp off Route 6, called the *Cloverleaf Project*. Ted Malone's company, Community Housing Resource, Inc. (CHR), was chosen to develop the property. CHR also developed the Sally's Way affordable housing complex in Truro. CHR's proposal for the Cloverleaf included 41 units consisting of 22 one-bedroom, 15 two-bedroom, and 4 three-bedroom units. The project is slated to include units for residents whose income covers four levels, from 30% of the area median income (AMI, now set at \$81,882), to 60-80% of AMI, 100% of AMI as well as 8 market

rate units. Up to 3 units would meet federal Americans with Disability Act standards.

The existing Sally's Way housing development contains 16 units with a total of 31 bedrooms on 4 acres. In comparison, the proposed Cloverleaf Project will have 41-units containing 64 bedrooms on 4 acres. **The Cloverleaf is double the density of Sally's Way** and is located in a prominent view-way along Route 6 where the visual impact will affect all passersby. We hope its design will benefit Truro residents on the housing side and Truro's economy through curb appeal.

This is an important development in Town (no pun intended), so we urge all taxpayers to stay informed and let us and the Town know your views as the project unfolds.

IN LAND MATTERS, THE TOWN HAS A LOT MORE

At the ATM the town voters approved the purchase of 69.9 acres of land from the Walsh family for \$5,100,000. Many concerns were raised by voters and part-timers about the value as a land deal, the unknown uses, the existence of other Town land that mitigates this purchase, and the incremental costs of anything the Town does with the land which will only increase the tax burden long term.

Many others, voters and part-time resident taxpayers alike, saw many benefits that outweighed these concerns.

- First, with the guaranteed involvement of the community, we will plan the uses of this land together through public hearings held by the Town's appointed committee and by community conversations and forums held by non-public community groups. The key issues, as one voter said, is about who is on the "Walsh property" committee.
- Second, the Truro Conservation Trust partnership to purchase likely means that at least 14 acres will be set aside as open space. The community will also have an opportunity to think creatively about the uses of the space in other ways to promote Truro's future.
- Third, contrary to some reports, the Town does not have large amounts of land usable for significant Town needs (such as the new DPW required by law). While there are 100+ town properties totaling just over 300 acres, most of these have serious constraints on public use: some are on land unsuitable for development, some are constrained by abutter rights based on prior town decisions, some are in the Seashore, some are simply too small. In other words, the Town needs land it can use for real municipal uses.
- Fourth, town acquisition means the community can scrutinize decisions and actions and voice our views – for some, by vote - on every aspect of the development of this property and hold public bodies accountable. This would not be possible if private developers acquired the property.
- Fifth, the price is right - better than right. The flat purchase price is just under \$73,000 an acre. The single acres of land in Truro can cost five times that amount or more. Other funding and partnerships may bring the Town's obligation down considerably. In other words, given that the Town needs land, this was an unbeatable "seize the moment" deal.

So, the voters did. Now, the opportunities belong to all of us.

As long as the world lasts, there will be wrongs, and if no man objected and no man rebelled, those wrongs would last forever.

- *Clarence Darrow*

UPDATE ON THE SHORT-TERM RENTAL TAX

On December 28, 2018, Governor Charlie Baker signed An Act Regulating and Insuring Short-Term Rentals, which, effective July 1, 2019, implements new rules related to short term real estate rentals. These new policies will impose some of the strictest rules in the nation on such properties. The new law will cover all real estate rentals made for a period of 31 days or less.

This law comes into effect for rental agreements made on or AFTER January 1, 2019 for rentals starting on or after July 1. The State has been issuing clarifications on the definitions and processes that now apply. For example, the State recently clarified that:

- A short-term rental is an occupied property where at least one room or unit is rented using advance reservations – this might include an apartment, house, cottage or condominium.
- "Rent" includes, insurance, linen fees, cleaning fees and booking fees but no longer includes security deposits.

There are many more such provisions that you will want to know about if this affects your household in Truro.

The Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce has issued recent and informative updates on these and other clarifications on the law. TPRTA has posted this information with permission on the TPRTA website and will continue to do so as and when more arrive. There you will also find links to FAQs and to the State's technical information releases (TIRs).

You can also check directly with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue site at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/room-occupancy-frequently-asked-questions#local-tax-faqs>

TRADESMEN'S PARK SOUTH IN THE WORKS

On May 8, the planning Board approved the Site Plan for a second Tradesmen's Park, adjacent to the Truro Motel along Rte. 6. The site will contain 12 work bays along with 100+ self-storage units. Community participation was high - with opponents and supporters out in force. The Planning Board worked hard to reach a conditioned site approval that allows the project to operate safely and with lesser impact on abutters.

PLANNED ROAD WORK IN TRURO - Mass DOT has undertaken extensive roadwork from South Highland Road to Shore Road, so expect to see and experience some changes in this area by Memorial Day. The Truro DPW has targeted six areas for paving and maintenance during FY 2020 that they are determined to accomplish: Paving Old County Road, Hatch Road, Castle Road, and Highland Road (in conjunction with installation of a water main from Shore Rd to Highland Rd). In addition, there will be overlay paving at the Transfer Station access to compactors and trailer. In the Fall of 2020, the Eagle Neck Creek culvert on Old Country Road (near Mill Pond) is expected to be replaced.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS NEEDS YOUR HELP

- Potholes and road repairs pop up along with the spring flowers in New England. So, the Department of Public Works asks us to report potholes/damage on public roadways. Contact the DPW Director at jcabral@truro-ma.gov or call DPW at (508) 349-2140 to report issues.

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

Name(s) _____

Permanent Address _____

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Truro phone _____

Dues	TPRTA 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

Just a reminder that our membership year begins January 1 each year now, though we are always happy to receive your membership renewal at any time. If this slipped through the cracks, please do so now! We are stronger together.

Spring/Summer 2019
 NEWSLETTER

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