

TRURO
PART-TIME
RESIDENT
TAXPAYERS'
ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 324 • Truro, MA 02666
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TPRTO NEWSLETTER

Winter 2018-19

Letter from the President

Dear Neighbors,

As the days shorten and we have turned the clocks back an hour, Truro will be in the throes of winter weather soon, and before we know it, we will be celebrating the holidays and a new year. I look forward to the clear and crisp blue-bird colored skies of Truro in January as I walk on the beach and ponder the new year and the issues that Truro will face in 2019.

With this in mind and for the benefit of all full- and part-timers alike, TPRTA will continue our efforts to promote one community affording all taxpayers respect, fair treatment and neighborly consideration; to be honest brokers in disseminating relevant information to the Truro community; to be an accurate and effective voice on taxation, the environment, the economy, and the many other issues facing Truro's entire community; and to be active and generous neighbors, clients, donors, and volunteers contributing to life in Truro year-round.

2018 – Truro Makes History

When I first wrote to you a year ago, I noted many “firsts” in Truro. As I wrap up my first year as TPRTA president, I continue to be reminded how much else is also “first-time” in Truro.

At the recent and rare event of a **Special Fall Town Meeting** on November 13, Truro voters put into effect two important and unprecedented decisions. TPRTA and the part-time community strongly supported and encouraged voters to learn about, debate, and with some modifications, support these two articles. We are very happy to report that this is what occurred!

House Size Cap in Residential Districts.

Truro passed a house size cap in the residential districts of Truro. This supplements and mirrors a similar cap adopted in 2017 in the Seashore district, effectively establishing generous yet reasonable maximum house size limitation town wide.

This alone is historic, but the education campaign along with an open, transparent, and engaging process led by the Planning Board and aided by local community groups was also notable. The cooperation, civility and concern for the well-being of the entire Truro community was both effective and in such contrast to the sharply divisive RTE discussions led by the Selectmen in 2017-18.

Local Regulation of Cannabis in Truro.

Truro voters also adopted the Planning Board's recommended bylaw for the regulation of marijuana growing, cultivation, and sales in Truro. This process was faster, more contentious, and hotly debated within a limited time scope driven by State-level parameters.

Adoption of local regulation of cannabis is a first in so many ways for Truro. For one, it is about cannabis - something that has never been legal up to now. Second, Truro's bylaw was shaped around a unique “craft cooperative” - a group of local, organic farmers wanting to supplement their food crops with another cash crop. This High Dunes craft cooperative is novel in Massachusetts. These together generated a bylaw that is different in many respects from those developed by other Towns. For all of us this is virgin territory. It merits our support and our vigilance to make sure that the community benefits, residences do not suffer adverse effects and that the High Dunes cooperative members succeed as well.

The shared community-wide efforts of full- and part-timers on both of these bylaws are a very encouraging reminder that when neighbors are given the opportunity to be neighbors in Truro, good things happen for all of us.

More **Special Fall Town Meeting** results and their possible implications for Truro are summarized in detail inside.

Part-Timers in the News

We have gained traction on some of the key issues we raised over the past two years.

Time to renew or begin your TPRTA Membership for 2019!

TPRTA is a year-round voice for the diverse views of more than 2000 “part-time” resident households in Truro. We want to make sure we hear from you, reflect your views accurately and act in your interests for the benefit of the entire Truro community.

Our accomplishments are enduring,
Our setbacks are temporary.
Our success depends on strong membership.

Sign up online at <https://tprta.org/membership/> or complete the paper form on the back of this flyer and mail to TPRTA | PO Box 324 | Truro MA 02666. Thank you!

• Taxation and Representation.

Our Past President, Regan McCarthy, joined Steve Fossella, the Provincetown PRTA President in an interview with TV host, Jack Peak on Outer Cape TV. An interesting and insightful interview ensued about the 5-C RTE Residential Tax Exemption, taxation without a vote, adverse effects on the communities adopting the 5C RTE as well as the prospects for other Outer Cape towns. To hear this intelligent interview please see [Peak Time | Part Time Resident Taxpayers: Taxation Without Representation](https://vimeo.com/294157148) at this URL: <https://vimeo.com/294157148>

• Stronger Together.

TPRTA and our sister organizations on the Cape were also central voices in several editorials in the Cape Cod Times and the Provincetown Banner on “having a say” vs. having a vote. We are noted in an article in the Berkshire region press where part-timers are also beginning to organize about tax and other policy issues that affect them locally.

TPRTA Board Members have also met and been in discussions with leadership of Part-Time Resident Taxpayer Associations on the Cape and in other parts of Massachusetts to discuss shared issues, interests and potential joint efforts to have our voices heard more broadly and collectively.

• You Count to Us.

At the end of this summer season, we asked you, our members, to respond to a survey so that we could accurately assess your opinions and act on your behalf on issues before the Town and voters in this Fall season. We thank you for your immediate and detailed responses! We had a very robust response covering more than 525 part-timers. A link to the Survey Report can be found on the TPRTA website and in our recent email blast.

Not surprisingly, the vast majority (87%) of respondents continued to oppose the 5C RTE and want it rescinded and also want TPRTA to join with others to change MA law to bar towns solely or largely dependent upon property taxes from adopting the 5-C RTE. An overwhelming majority (nearly 95%) wants the BoS to complete an evaluation of the 5-C RTE's actual impact and effect on the entire community by next summer. TPRTA has heard you loud and

clear! Most surprising was that while only 6% are currently registered to vote in Truro, nearly two-thirds indicated that they would register to vote in Truro if eligible. **Eligibility requirements and necessary forms can be found on the TPRTA website.**

Your views on taxation and on cannabis were presented in late Sept. respectively to the BoS for their Tax Classification Hearing and to the Planning Board during their formulation of the Special Town Meeting Article on Cannabis. Our survey respondents indicated - and got - adequate cannabis regulation addressing adverse effects on neighboring residential properties. The Selectmen disappointingly approved a 20% RTE this year. (Provincetown increased to 23% and Wellfleet adopted at 20% this year over strong opposition from part-timers also).

Your shared views on the House Size article were also forefront to the Planning Board

and to OneTruro in the drafting, finalization and ultimately, the outcome of the vote on the House Size Cap in residential districts of Truro, though these had been the subject of earlier public hearings and forums in 2017-18 and finalization of Article 6 pre-dated this survey. Please visit www.tprta.org to see the detailed survey report. It is worth taking a read!

With this in mind, we intend to represent all of you and your varied opinions to ensure that Truro both retains its rural charm but also sustains our full-time neighbors, and that our elected and appointed officials not only hear but listen to our voices as positive and integral members of this community.

I am always available and can be contacted anytime at tprta@tprta.org.

Best Wishes and Happy Holidays,

Cathy Haynes, President

Town News

Special Town Meeting Results

Truro's Special Town Meeting was held on November 13, 2018, attracting 234 voters who voiced their opinions on key articles which could potentially change the future residential face of Truro.

Articles 1 through 5 | Financial Articles.

A solid 2/3+ majority voted to approve these articles, which mainly dealt with expenditures and allocation of funds for capital improvements. As no comments on these articles were raised, it only took approximately 15 minutes for voters to approve:

- ✓ Funding of a storage shed at Head of the Meadow Beach for storage of a rescue boat,
- ✓ Addition of safety doors and associated equipment for the Public Safety Facility, and
- ✓ Re-appropriation of funds remaining after Old County Road culvert repairs to culvert engineering and remediation at multiple locations throughout town
- ✓ "Housekeeping" measure to reallocate monies to film Board and Committee meetings
- ✓ Merging balance of capital improvements projects into the capital stabilization fund.

The total re-allocated funds totaled \$148,745.89.

Article 6 | House Size Regulations are Generous and Adopted.

A large majority (3/4 of the voters) approved this article. Since 2005, about 60% of new homes built in Truro have been larger than 5,000 square feet with some nearing 10,000 square feet. While mostly along the shorelines, left unregulated, such unlimited development had the ability to spread throughout Truro, dominate the landscape and forever change Truro's small-town character. A comprehensive information effort as well as many public discussions on the proposed article - including a fun and informative Lego display - was ongoing in 2017-18. At STM a raucous discussion took place: Some held that the house sizes proposed were not restrictive enough and other felt they were too restrictive. Many voiced their opinion that regulation of house size is needed now in order to keep the existing character of Truro intact. In the end the proposed by-law was passed with one minor amendment - to note that effective date is the date of STM, November 13, 2018.

Article 7 | Marijuana Farming, Production & Retail Sales are Here to Stay. Massachusetts is one of 10 states to legalize the production, sale and use of

both recreational and medical marijuana. A conflict between the laws in these States and Federal Law exists regarding recreational marijuana where it remains a controlled substance like cocaine and heroin. Medical marijuana is legal in 33 states. Massachusetts has established the Cannabis Control Commission "to implement and administer laws enabling access to Medical and Adult (Recreational) Use of Marijuana in the Commonwealth." This Commission has developed voluminous guidance for the Towns in Massachusetts to create their own regulations governing all aspects of the growth, production and sale of marijuana within their borders.

Truro's Planning Board has had the responsibility of developing regulations to govern not only the growing of marijuana but also the multiplicity of activities involved in testing, designing, packaging, transporting, securing, and selling both medical and recreational marijuana. Since Truro does not have commercial and industrial districts within which marijuana growing and processing could be separately zoned, these activities will take place within both the Residential Districts and the North Truro Route 6A Limited Business District. The Planning Board worked to balance the needs of both the farmers with the needs of residential abutters who would be living near facilities requiring security systems, fencing, fertilizers, and lighting.

While the High Dune Craft Cooperative (COOP) stated that they intended to grow organically, and “in the open” Truro’s short growing season, Outer Cape weather conditions and unanticipated circumstances may dictate that structures will be necessary. The COOP also emphasized the potential benefit of increased employment especially for young adults in the area and stated that up to 20 new jobs would be created.

Several amendments to Article 7 were

proposed and passed:

- ✓ To increase startup square footage (to 20,000 sf and total square footage (to 70,000 sf) allowed;
- ✓ To increase the permitted number of micro-businesses from 1 to 2;
- ✓ An amendment to ban growing under outdoor lighting was defeated.

We believe the objectives of creating jobs,

investment and diverse tax revenue opportunities subject to reasonable controls, while not easy to achieve, is important and worthwhile. It is a time to discover, learn and act accordingly.

Petitioned Articles 8 and 9 were filed late; no discussion or vote was held.

Upcoming Issues

Housing vs the Environment on Cape

A new report from the Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC), *Housing on Cape Cod: The High Cost of Doing Nothing*, by David M. Quinn and Stephanie S. Coxe (available at www.capehousing.org) was the subject of a November 5 editorial in *The Cape Codder*. In this editorial the CEO and the Chairman of the HAC discuss the impact of high-rent seasonal housing as a fact and an economic driver against the need for year-round workforce housing. Environmental impacts of both are also discussed.

In short, while in support of developing proactive ways to increase housing stock at affordable rates for the workforce, this report concludes that not all policies that purport to make housing more affordable are efficient or effective, and some, like poorly-thought-out increases in density, could create or worsen problems like groundwater contamination that would be very expensive to address, greatly increasing taxes and thus local cost of living.

TPRTA continues to support efforts to address affordable housing, economic development and environmental protection comprehensively and as part of a larger regional planning effort.

A compelling summary and link to this report can be found on the TPRTA website.

Go Green. Go Paperless?

If you would like to receive future TPRTA newsletters only by email, please send an email to tprta@tprta.org with the subject: **Go Paperless.**

An Increasing Focus on the Budget Development Process

In the recent TPRTA Survey of Truro Part-Time Resident Taxpayers the category “RTE, taxation, and budgets” had the most “mentions” in response to the question, “What are the most important issues facing Truro now and in the future that TPRTA should address proactively as a priority?”

Mindful of this and many comments from members, we intend to be vigilant to deliberations, priorities and justifications of the Financial Committee (FinComm) and Budget Task Force in their formulation of the budget prior to the April 2019 ATM. Truro’s budget and tax rate rely upon the out-sized contributions of part-time - resident taxpayers and the 5C RTE process now obscures budget development and vote. TPRTA has thus increased our efforts to understand the methods and reasoning that will be used to set the budget and tax rate for FY2020.

TPRTA Board Members recently met with Finance Committee chair Robert Panessiti to underscore TPRTA’s:

- ✓ Interest in learning how we can be helpful to the budget development process, including making suggestions that represent the interests of part-time residents,
- ✓ Intention to pay close attention to the process, and
- ✓ Commitment to communicating objective findings and observations of the process.

Mr. Panisitti ensured his cooperation and pledged that a schedule of all their meetings will be promulgated in a timely way. TPRTA pledged that, as is our practice, information and commentary passed to and from part-timers will be fact-based and timely.

Whenever the people are well informed, they can be trusted with their own government; that whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights.

- Thomas Jefferson.

Wastewater - The REAL Water Use Problem

Truro relies on septic systems to dispose of their wastewater, which remains a serious problem in many parts of Truro, especially those nearly sensitive shorelines and bodies of water. While we will continue to raise this issue in public as you have asked us to, you can help lessen the effects of wastewater and the contamination of groundwater by maintaining or upgrading your septic system.

- ✓ The MA DEP recommends pumping out the scum and solids from your septic system every three years.
- ✓ Consider upgrading immediately to a “Title V septic system” If you haven’t done so or do not have a leach field.
- ✓ Check out state and county have low-cost financing options available for upgrades at <https://www.barnstablecountysepticloan.org/> and <http://www.barnstablecountysepticloan.org>.

Encourage everyone in your neighborhood to do the same. When it comes to ground water, there are no fences. When it comes to wastewater, our neighbors’ “business” is our business.

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 TPRTO: \$	
	To TEEA Scholarship Fund: \$	
Total Enclosed: \$		

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

Contact TPRTO at

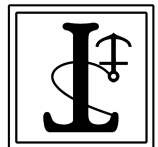
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Winter 2018

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