



T R U R O
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Minutes of Twenty Second Annual Members' Meeting
Truro Meetinghouse, Truro, MA
Saturday, July 1, 2017

With a quorum of the Board, and a "full house" of more than 150 Members in attendance, the meeting was called to order at 10:10 AM

- 1. Guest Speakers: Regan McCarthy, President**, opened the meeting and introduced existing board members. She also introduced guest speakers: John Marksbury, Chair of the Friends of the Truro Meetinghouse: and State Senator Julian Cyr.

Mr. Marksbury welcomed attendees to the Meetinghouse, briefly described renovations and improvements made to the landmark Meetinghouse, thanks to funding from the Community Preservation Act and contributions from the Meetinghouse Friends and our organization.

State Senator Cyr was elected in 2016 to represent the Cape and Islands. He described key issues connected to affordable housing, the opioid epidemic, healthcare, providing service for an aging population, preserving the environment, and water quality. He said that he and others in his age group have returned to Truro to live and establish businesses, but find housing costs prohibitive. He answered questions regarding room occupancy tax, emergency services and senior housing,

- 2. Minutes:** Minutes of the previous Annual Membership Meeting (2016) were approved.

- 3. Organizational Matters:**

Truro Part-Time Resident Taxpayers' Association is now incorporated under this name and has received tax exempt (501c3) status from the IRS; it will operate on "calendar year" fiscal year. **Regan McCarthy** reported that current TPRTA Board officers will continue in their positions. The group is actively moving forward with **leadership and succession planning** as well as **recruitment** of new Board members, inviting members interested in joining the Board to contact her. McCarthy reported on robust TPRTA membership and finances. She also announced a new capability that enables members to pay dues and make donations on-line.

- 4. Town Issues: Members discussed**

- a. House- Size Cap in Seashore District** - Members expressed wide support for the recent adoption of this article at ATM and additional interest in seeing this applied Town wide.
- b. Year-Round Condo Use** - Members agreed with voters' rejection due to concerns over water quality and environmental impact, while several also indicated a desire to find a way for year round condo use to be made possible. McCarthy mentioned her conversation with the Town Manager that there might be ways to redefine districts that might lawfully allow year-round use in some parts of Town

and/or to draft a bylaw that would satisfy residential property owner's concerns about water/septic, environmental, safety and legal issues, thereby increasing the likelihood of adoption in 2018.

- c. **Street Definition** The PB has not prioritized drafting a new article on "**Street Definition**" which currently defines road width at 40 feet. As a result, many properties along roads not exempted from this definition (i.e., State/Town roads are exempt), may not conform to town requirements. McCarthy reported on efforts to have this issue restored to the PB list of priorities in 2018.
- d. **BoS Special Meetings:** Two were announced: a special BOS meeting focusing on the proposed RTE (Residential Tax Exemption), and open to all, scheduled for July 18; and a meeting with Part-Time Resident Taxpayers on August 9.

5. **Residential Tax Exemption (RTE).** The largest portion of the Annual Membership Meeting was devoted to the RTE. The proposed tax exemption, which would lower property taxes for year-round residents, will raise taxes for part time residents. McCarthy and a group of members had prepared a presentation based on the Town's materials to explain the facts on the RTE, scope of impact, mechanism, and proposed value of the tax shift for FY 2018, if adopted. With active engagement and many comments and questions, Members proceeded through the presentation.

Many participants were outspoken, and those who spoke were unwavering in their opposition to the Town's proposal, in major part because it creates a tax shift only on to part-timers and is not based on need or hardship. At the same time, Members expressed great concern for those who may need tax relief and supported needs-based forms of tax relief with all taxpayers sharing the cost, as we do now. TPRTA's proposed alternatives for needs-based tax relief were discussed. Members approved continuing efforts to get the Town to consider adopting these.

Members described the RTE as discriminatory, deeply divisive to the community, subverting process and being rushed by a part of the BOS with no sense of impact on full- or part-timers, no sense of historical perspective, no examination of alternatives, unclear on determination of need, and not properly presented to the community at large, specifically full-timers. Some members suggested the RTE is unconstitutional under federal law and one offered to prepare a brief on the matter. Some pointed out that part-time residents generate nearly 80% of the taxes and fees that pay for public services in Truro, before application of an RTE.

When put to a show of hands vote, **all but three of 153 attendees opposed the RTE**. Of these, one person would favor the RTE if it was needs-based while two abstained, asking for more information about town response to needs-based alternatives.

As next steps on the RTE, the group asked and authorized the TPRTA Board to

- seek legal advice on options on the RTE
- prepare additional presentations for BoS meeting on the RTE coming in the summer
- oppose the RTE without hesitation and encourage the Town to consider TPRTA's needs-based alternatives for tax relief that do not involve a tax shift only on to part-timers
- explore prospects for gaining the vote on budgetary and financial matters
- consider encouraging eligible members to register one or family members to vote in Truro in order to have an effect on direction of the Town.

6. **Adjournment.** Business was concluded and the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 PM

Submitted by: Frank Korahais, TPRTA Board Secretary