

Roberta Lema

Truro MA

To: Governor Maura Healy
From: Roberta Lema, lead petitioner
Date: December 21, 2023
cc: Senator Julian Cyr, Rep. Sarah Peake, other MA legislators,
Alicia Rebello-Pradas, Deputy Chief of Staff/Legislative Affairs
Re: Community Opposition to Special Legislation Sought by Truro Select Board to hold Town Meetings outside of Truro

Dear Governor Healy,

I am submitting, as lead petitioner, a petition signed by more than 300 residents of Truro reflecting strong opposition to a recent decision and pending action of the Truro Select Board (SB), approved on December 5th for submission to the Governor. The special legislation seeks emergency action by the Governor' office to allow Town meetings to be held outside of Truro in one of four Outer Cape Towns (Provincetown, Wellfleet, Eastham and/or Orleans). This proposition was soundly and overwhelmingly rejected by voters on Nov 28th at Special Town Meeting, an event that was four times continued. Special Town Meeting is now set by nearly unanimous vote to a date and location certain on May 4, 2024 at the Truro Central School, that is, the same date as Annual Town Meeting.

Our petition and opposition ask you to set aside and not to act upon the "Special Legislation" request to allow Truro to hold Town Meetings outside of Truro for several reasons, including the specific rejection by voters of this proposition one week before the SB took this decision, the misleading and unwarranted "emergency" justifications offered that do not withstand scrutiny, the absence of a need for this relief, and that it contravenes MGL Ch 39, § 9.

This action by the Select Board has taken place in the context of contentious differences among voters on two large capital projects in which the capital debt would exceed a projected \$100M for a community of 2,500 full-time residents. It also follows the unprecedented and targeted challenges to 66 new voters, while using them as an excuse to continue Special Town Meeting three times due to "hearings" on voter challenges (yet citing MGL Ch 39, § 10), and conducting the hearings using an improperly constituted Board of Registrars. In this context, this Special Legislation is not a one-off; the petitioners view this as yet another effort to suppress voter turnout and interfere with voting rights. In any case, it is not necessary given the facts and the voters' decision on Nov. 28th. Additional information on the basis of the petitioners' concerns is in the attached documents.

This petition, attached, was signed on an apolitical basis by 300 Truroites by close of business on December 20th yet remains open. In addition to the signatures, 95 petition-signers have added comments so far - these are compelling testimonies and keen observations of community concerns.

Please do not hesitate to contact me (robertadan2023@gmail.com) with questions or information. I would be grateful to be kept apprised on the status of the matter as it proceeds and remain ready to address your questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Encl.



Truro Town Meetings should be in Truro



SELECT BOARD-SUBMITTED SPECIAL LEGISLATION TO OVERTURN TRURO VOTERS' DECISION MUST BE STOPPED!

This petition asks Gov. Maura Healy, State elected officials Julian Cyr and Sarah Peake, and the State Legislature to set aside the "Special Legislation" request to allow Truro to hold Town Meetings outside of Truro. This "special legislation" was

approved by Truro's Select Board (SB) on December 5th for submission to the Governor. My signing indicates I join with many others who support asking the Governor and Legislature to set this request aside and not act on it.

WHY THIS MATTERS

On November 28th the largest-ever turnout of Truro voters roundly rejected the Select Board Chair's motion to hold Special Town Meeting (STM) on February 3, 2024 — a nighttime meeting in the dead of winter — and to seek Special Legislation to hold this meeting outside of Truro. The voters instead specifically and overwhelmingly approved moving STM intact to the same Spring date as Annual Town Meeting and excluded the provision for special legislation to hold meetings outside of Truro. But this is not the only reason to honor the will of the voters.

MASS LAW REQUIRES TOWN MEETINGS TO BE HELD IN TOWN

This request violates our MGL Ch 39, § 9. The SB has indicated it wants the Charter Review Committee — a body appointed by the Select Board — to expedite a change in the charter to allow out-of-town Town Meetings as well. Do we really think they will not do as the Select Board wants? Fortunately, voters do get a say on that eventually.

"HOME RULE" SPECIAL LEGISLATION CAN ONLY BE CONSIDERED ON ONE OF TWO BASES

- First, if the voters — the Town's legislature — approve it.

The voters have not been asked to approve this special legislation. In fact, we have not even seen this legislation — it has not been publicly produced. The SB only got it just before the December 5th meeting — even they do not know what it asks for. The SB is again attempting to override the voters' will by putting this forward.

- Second, if the Governor introduces it — it is then called a "Governor's Bill" — and this is what the Select Board approved on December 5th. Asking the Governor to do what the voters rejected is undemocratic and intended to suppress free speech and the right to vote. The Governor will hopefully be as horrified as we voters are.



Truro Town Meetings should be in Truro

THERE IS NO NEED FOR THIS SPECIAL LEGISLATION

Truro has enough space within its two largest buildings to accommodate more than 1100 voters easily. All we need to do — just like Brewster and other Towns do — is to make modest and relatively inexpensive upgrades to our A/V technology so we can all be seen and heard simultaneously across several buildings. As our IT consultant said on December 5th — it is easy and effective. The Town has ample time to get this done.

THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS SPECIAL LEGISLATION

The Town Manager's justification manufactures two fake emergencies. At the December 5th SB meeting, the Town Manager made two assertions that do not withstand real scrutiny. First, he said "we know of discussions" about an alleged challenge "in terms of the continuance" to May 4th. Really? This is rumor and speculation at best. He alleges this could precipitate a "Citizen Petition" signed by "200" calling for a Special Town Meeting within 60 days — ah, the February date, after all. And what would that meeting be about? It cannot be the same as what is on the warrant for May 4th and it cannot be used to challenge the vote on Nov 28th — that vote was accepted. No voter reconsideration was requested in the STM meeting. Thus, any challenge to the vote can only be achieved by litigation against the Town. Not by conjuring a Special Town Meeting masked as a blatant vote reconsideration effort.

The Town Manager also said there is "litigation in Orleans District Court" that could cause "the judge to move the Special Town Meeting date earlier." This is nonsense. A case was filed on Nov 2 seeking an injunction to bar the improperly constituted Board of Registrars from hearing the challenges to 66 voters. The court denied the motions on Nov 2, as the Town well knows. The challenges were heard and 70% of those heard were deemed properly registered. This court case has no remaining impact on the new, voter-approved date of Special Town Meeting.

In other words, fake emergencies are the basis for an improper invalidation of the voters' will and decision to hold STM on May 4, 2024 in Truro.

IT IS ON US AGAIN

WE have to tell the Governor and our legislators NOT to approve this "Governor's Bill" and special legislation. Instead, they must respect the voters' will — the will of Truro's legislature — to hold this meeting in Truro as we voted and to hold all future Town meetings in Truro consistent with the law and our choice.

By signing this petition, you endorse this position and understand your name will be included in those who oppose this action — and this will be sent to the Governor, our elected representatives and the legislative leadership on Beacon Hill.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE. PLEASE SIGN NOW.

Roberta Lema and Dan Winslow

A Petition from Citizens of Truro MA to Gov. Maura Healy, Sen Cyr, Rep. Peake and Members of the MA legislature | Opposing Select Board's Special Legislation Request

Signatories as of 12/20/23 at 3 PM | All Verified Truro Residents and Taxpayers

Stephen Williams Peter Herridge Claudia Colley Colette Swietnicki Scott wade Taylor
Ronnie Sanders Peter Van Stratum Michael walker Helen McNeil-Ashton Paula Hult
Joseph N Gibbons Mary H Rose Jack McMahon Frederick Ruyman Ron Singer Francis Sullivan
John Marksbury Christine T Markowski Robert Bateman Timothy Horn Eleanor collins Mark Bensky
Rene Christensen Elaine OKeefe Thomas carpenter Vicky Tomayko Anthony Wolff Bill Israel
Melissa McCarthy patricia giangregorio Jolie Golomb Nathalie Ferrier Sandra Kilbridge
Drew Mirque gwen simpkins Joel Auerbach Jon Winder Douglas King Janet London
Catherine Van Stratum Jeffrey Weilburg Nancy W Carpenter Jill H Mays Jane Rudd Laurie Gavenda
Susan Doherty judith tsipis Alice Longley Elisabeth M Grunig Sharon Stahl Karen McCabe
Carol Ann Damico Ellen Conklin joseph m mckniff Brian Tetreault Andrew Colameta Deborah Snow
William Francis Golden diane messinger Maureen Downey P Fitzmaurice Alexander Marshall
Michael Elms connie mather Sandra Walker David Perry Joyce Wichowski Beverly Bergstrom
James Goshen Robert E Simpson Louis Rimondi Lisa Kavanaugh Patty Walsh Stacey Parks
Albert E Gentle Jr Christine Winder Joe Anarella Lauren Anderson Richard Lee Mike Prokosch
barbara johnson Peter Chepus Frank Messina Barbara Correa Lee a shapiro art hultin
Paul Bergstrom George Dineen barbara clivio Neal Walker Barbara Bond Alan Dinsfriend
Patrick Mullins Jennifer Mullins Debbie White William Westheimer Catherine Bingham Paul Berman
Patric Pepper Joel Kimball Mary Ellen Kimball Elizabeth Francis R Bruce Boleyn Denise Nover

N=300+ (petition remains open). See original and updates at <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/truro-town-meetings-should-be-in-truro>

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Michael Nover Caroline jaenicke David Kirchner Lisa DiStefano Kristen Arute Joanne Barkan
Carrie Stapleton Barbara Wohlgemuth Karen kirby Lucy Clark Mimi Turchinetz jane Petterson
Carl Hagberg Diana Tobias luther bumps Janice Pelosi Claire Aniello Susan Mitchell
Jan Worthington Amy Wolff Patricia Fontecchio Joyce garner John Tinkham Theresa Daigle
Nita Giordano Lynne Rosenbaum Shawn McNulty Annie Ditacchio Truro voter Debra Hollander
Nadine Tetreault Patricia Bellinger Patricia Wheeler Leslie Hardesty Grace Freundlich
Harold Keenan Truro Raymond Clarke Anne Auerbach Marcia Hakala Margaret D Forgione
Karen Ruymann Paul Rennert Carole Reichhelm Claudia Shwide-Slavin Lauren Mazzella
Richard Wood christel pierron Eugenia Porges James Sexton Cyrus Claffey Kelli Thomas
Adam Thomas Jon Friedman Steven Stahl Kurt D Gress Robin Prout Stephen M Briscoe
Sarah Ireland Sharon Mandli Brian Boyle Seth Swoboda Kenneth Bruce Monteith Frank Horner
candida monteith Ryan Schmidt Jean Horner Edward Kinsella Sharon Lukacs Angela Gaimari
Thomas Lukacs Gwen Kazlouskas-Noyes Scott Kazlouskas-Noyes Roberta Kinsella Karen Kinsella
Alec Stuart Meredith Dickinson Robert Knight Mary Beth Murphy Michael Weinstein Candace Nagle
Joe Connor Jeanine Bandiero Ernest Jacob Rosemary Boyle Kathleen Hull Dede Huang
Polly Marmaduke Scott Warner Jack Riemer Pamela Wolff Paula Charette Eric Bingham
Janet London Harriet J Hobbs Karen Kuehl Maureen Kelly Thomas Lipsky Brian Hyde
Sylvia Hammerman Marie-Danielle Tanguay Geoffrey Doherty Warren Green Linda Aguilar

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Bernard Dickinson Peter Moody Noah santos Polly Guggenheim eric oehling Katherine Oehling
Amy Sanders Harold Hakala Carol Pesiri Tobin Gerhart Helen Addison Steve Sollog Anthony Baker
Michael Peters William Aikman Donna Vogt nancy thornley Debra Best-Parker Joan Holt
Gladys Bateman Maurice P Walsh Holly Gardner Curtis Hartman Marshall Simpkins Joan Moriarty
John Eisenberg Peter Weiler Jo Citron Jytte Klausen Deborah Rivlin Eric Parker Michael Forgione
Jackie Palmer Kathleen Horton Catherine Skowron Roberta Lema Paul McClanahan Alan Wild
Raymond Vogt Linda slater Steven Pelosi Warren Tobias Anne Roberts Daniel P Slater Stuart Alex
Ronald Boyles Savi Alex Nany Boyles David Hammerman Marilyn Lashley - Truro voter
Andrew Lashley - Truro Voter Elena McClanahan LOIS LESSARD john power Donald Morin
Bonnie j sollog Laurie Lee Breta Boots Beverly Miller Juliana MacAller Francis Johnson
Dennis O'Brien Wes Chapman Stefanie oneill Robert Hult Susan I Chapman Kate O'Brien
Janice Johnson Timothy J Hickey Daniel Winslow Michael Janoplis Jon Slater

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A Petition from Citizens of Truro MA to Gov. Maura Healy, Sen Cyr, Rep. Peake and Members of the MA legislature | Opposing Select Board's Special Legislation Request

COMMENTS

Name	Comments
Jon Slater	When will this Board learn to respect the democratic will of the people?
Timothy J Hickey	The will of the people is what is important.
Susan I Chapman	Please keep the meeting in Truro
Robert Hult	My vote for public trust and transparency
Wes Chapman	Leave the 11/28/2023 decision as is
Breta Boots	The Truro town select board is purposefully trying to circumvent the will of the voters again!
Bonnie J Sollog	Disturbing tactics by Truro Select Board
Donald Morin	Appalling disregard for a legitimately held vote by Town of Truro voters.
Lois Lessard	Keep it up!!
Andrew Lashley	Stop this charade, town manager and select board members. You've already lost and you know it.
Jerome Hollander	Why do theses planners feel that integrity doesn't matter ? It's bad enough that they undermine confidence in their ability to represent the will of the townspeople now are essentially discouraging our support
Nancy Boyles	The actions of the Truro Select Board are entirely inappropriate regarding this issue.
Savi Alex	I don't understand how Truro can hold town meetings outside of Truro and have it be a legal vote. This should not be legal.
Ronald Boyles	These people will stop at nothing.
Warren Tobias	Do not ignore my vote or my voice!
Alan Wild	This is totally illegal and the town manager and the entire select board need to resign or be recalled.

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COMMENTS (cont)

- Roberta Lema This is the fourth time since October that the Select Board is interfering with our right to vote at Special Town Meeting. This has to stop - they seem unwilling to grasp the new reality in Truro - that they are losing the confidence, trust and respect of the vast majority of this community because of their efforts to control the voters' choice. The people are not with the SB majority on issues and oppose their efforts to impose their will on us. If they won't listen to the voters, maybe the Governor and legislators can stop this. We need their help.
- Catherine Skowron Have the Town Meeting at School & COA simultaneously with a link.
- Jackie Palmer Revolution is in our blood. March on! Let the peoples voice be understood, respected and allowed in a democracy that must stand. Protect Truro and thank you for your hard, thorough and committed effort for a special place with special people
- Eric Parker Outrageous! If TM held in Ptown, where does anyone park? Why must I travel miles and miles to have my voice heard? This is not acceptable on any level.
- Deborah Rivlin We all voted to hold the vote on May 4, 2024.
- Maurice P Walsh I guess the board forgot they work for the people of Truro
- Joan Holt I urge townspeople to send a personal email to Governor Healey alerting her to the power politics being used by Truro town officials to thwart the will of Truro voters. Use the email form:
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/email-the-governors-office>
- Debra Best-Parker The Truro select board is doing everything in its power to ignore the desire of voters and towns people to forward their agenda
- Carol Pesiri This is unbelievable
- Robert Daglio I don't like the Truro Select Board trying to get an approval for STMs in other towns without asking Truro taxpayers to have a vote on whether we also would like that.
- Linda Aguilar You represent the voters of Truro. Please comply with our will and hold our town meetings in the town of Truro.
- Janet London May Town Meeting in Truro Is reasonable but out of town is not reasonable.
- Eric Bingham Keep it local. Do not create barriers for voters. Holding the vote at the TCS in May is fine.

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COMMENTS (cont.)

- Paula Charette Thank you for this horrible news.! What is happening to this sweet town?
- Pamela Wolff This should be a settled matter. We voted! Does that mean nothing?
- Jack Riemer We the People are not served by Truro Town Government and suffer the effects of a Backsliding Democracy which willingly ignores the Public Interest led by an Autocratic Select Board aided by the Town Manager, time for a Change!!!
- Ernest Jacob Throw the bums out.
- Thomas Lukacs Cannot fathom why the board of selectmen would do this. Defies reason!
- Candida Monteith I am a third-generation resident of the town of Truro. My grandchildren will be the fifth. Town Meetings must be local. Full time residents who work in another town or Hyannis cannot get to Town Meetings after work. Out of town meetings and weekday meetings are a hard ship for workers and suppresses the vote.
- Kenneth Bruce Monteith Too many shenanigans! Not until this development did I realize how bad our government really is.
- Brian Boyle Totally unnecessary. The technology to have Town Meeting in Truro is readily available.
- Steven Stahl It is appalling the steps the select board in our town takes to do what they want against the will of its voting citizens. I fully support this petition.
- Adam Thomas A move out of town would provide even less voting process oversight, perhaps that's the intent. There's a reason why the majority wanted our town meeting in our town.
- Kelli Thomas Truro town meetings belong only in Truro, no matter what your politics.
- Cyrus Claffey The town discussed specifically to hold the town meeting at the Truro ball field because it was agreed that Provincetown's meeting place would not accommodate all the expected Truro voters. Why the select board would petition the governor to hold the ATM at a location other than the ball field is, therefore, contravening to what was discussed at the town meeting. Note that this was all recorded on video so that the governor's staff can observe it for themselves.

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COMMENTS (cont.)

James Sexton	The Truro Selection have run amuck! They are not listening to the voters in Truro and trying every underhanded thing they can come up with to ignore what the voters want. They are also freely spending our hard earned money. They have adopted a policy of tax and spend. My taxes went up 20% this last tax bill.
Eugenia Porges	Keep meetings in Truro!!!!
Paul Rennert	Please help Truro voters stop the undermining of the town meeting to be held in Truro. Town meetings are a venerable example of the principal of democracy and cannot be subject to the same attacks on voter's rights that we now see country-wide. Massachusetts should be an example of how to conduct and support fair and democratic voting.
Karen Ruymann	Town meeting MUST be held IN Truro in order to achieve optimal voter participation. Please - no more tactics aimed at suppressing voter turn-out?!
Raymond Clarke	In a real democracy, voting must be made as easy as possible. That means in Town at a time that works for as many as possible.
Harold Keenan	Holding the meeting in Truro allows maximum voter participation. Obviously the SB is afraid of that.
Grace Freundlich	Another outrage
Patricia Bellinger	As a Truro Property owner and someone who believes in our democratic form of government, I reject these efforts to ignore, obfuscate and deny the will of the people of our town. Over and over the town manager has led efforts to diminish and suppress voter turnout with one maneuver after another. As an African American citizen who was born before the Voting Rights Act of 1965, thus without this basic civil right, I reject these efforts to undermine the legitimate rights and indeed responsibilities of Truro voter. This is an outrage and I call on Gov. Healy to recognize this illegitimate endeavor for what it is and to reject these brazen disenfranchisement attempts worthy of despicable gerrymanderers in the American South.
Debra Hollander	Since when was "no" for an answer not acceptable? The SB should graciously recognize the will of those who put them in power
Theresa Daigle	Voting should be as easy as possible for all Truro citizens.
John Tinkham	Time to vote these losers out

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COMMENTS (cont.)

- Patricia Fontecchio Truro town meetings need to be held in the town of Truro. This is important to me as a voting full time resident
- Jean G Krulic Changing the town where meetings can be held goes against the views of majority of voters
- Jan Worthington Town Meeting should be held in Truro - period, end of discussion.
- Claire Aniello Keep Truro decision-making in Truro.
- Carl Hagberg Why do Truro officials repeatedly ignore the wishes of its citizens to hold open meetings at convenient times? Things are mighty fishy here - totally disrespectful and lacking common sense - and common decency....
- Mimi Turchinetz The town meeting should be in May in Truro.
- Barbara Wohlgemuth It seems the Select Board and Town Manager are determined to do whatever they want despite the will of the voters
- Joanne Barkan Thank you, Take Back Truro, for discovering and acting on this outrageous machination of the Truro Select Board!! Joanne Barkan
- Lisa DiStefano Truro select board are not listening to the people of Truro! We want the right vote in Truro!
- Joel Kimball Governor please do not allow the Truro select to overturn a fair vote for our town meeting in April. This is a runaway select board taking action for their own reasons and not listening to the town voters.
- Patric Pepper If Truro wants to continue being a town in Massachusetts its elected officials ought to pursue holding its meetings in Truro and inform its citizens of proposed legislations.
- Patrick Mullins Keep Truro's vote in Truro!!! And we need new selectmen.
- Alan Dinsfriend Voters in Truro should not have to travel to a different town to exercise their democratic right to vote. It is an egregious attempt to reduce the number of voters at Town meetings. It is undemocratic. It absolutely should not be allowed!
- Barbara Bond As a person who contributes to the well-being of Truro residents I strongly object to the Select board 's efforts to control the town's Future ! Please don't let this happen.
- Barbara Clivio I am a registered voter in Truro and want to continue to have our town meetings in Truro.

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COMMENTS (cont.)

- George Dineen Thanks for all you do!
- Barbara Johnson Illegal maybe. immoral, definitely
- Mike Prokosch I am not a Truro voter -- my family has owned a small house in Truro for 60 years -- but I am extremely worried about the direction town government seems to be taking and about some of the land use / water protection decisions that are in the works. Whatever the outcome, these decisions should be made with maximum participation of Truro's voters. That includes holding town meetings in Truro. I urge Governor Healey to deny the Select Board's request for permission to hold town meetings outside Truro.
- Richard Lee STM attendees (at least the fraction allowed in) voted to not have a meeting in February, and to not have a meeting out of town. There is no legitimate need for special legislation to override a vote of TM.
- Lauren Anderson The people have clearly spoken. Over 700 of us voted to have this meeting in May 2024. Don't think we are going to forget about this under handed nonsense when we go to vote for a new Select Board at our next town election.
- Christine Winder Not so concerned about out of town vote (if in outer cape) But very concerned about them moving the date we voted for
- Albert E Gentle Jr I thought the 500 + people had spoken on 11/28/23.
- Patty Walsh Sarah Peake and Gov. Healy have time to do the right thing and reject moving the Town Mtg to another town for a February vote. Keep the Special Town Mtg in Truro which will be held on 4 May 2024. Not sure if you are aware that the traffic study, for the area of the DPW and Walsh properties, were conducted in February 2022 or 2023. No one is around Truro in February. The traffic study should of happened during the summer to give an accurate look at what will happen in Truro during the summer. The Select board were not forth coming about this impact on traffic and accidents. The same goes for holding a Special Mtg in February. No one will be here to vote. The people voted by a vast majority to hold this Mtg in May. Please do not be fooled by the deceptive practice of Town Officials and the Select Board. Thank you for your time.
- Lisa Kavanaugh When I left the last debacle of the special town meeting, It was voted on by the people that the meeting would be held in Truro in the spring. Do you think your communist Russia?
- Louis Rimondi Meeting should be in Truro

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COMMENTS (cont.)

Connie Mather	There is no emergency that would support the Home Rule Emergency request. This is usually enacted when there is civil unrest, natural disaster, or imminent threat to a municipality. Autonomy is not warranted in this situation!
Alexander Marshall	Our will is being ignored
Deborah Snow	I'm done with being used as a tool by elected officials who are only out for their own gain, not what's best for their constituents.
Janet London	Keep voting in Truro at a date when most of the voters are here like In May-Nov.
Douglas King	Please Governor do not sign this Governor's Bill or Special legislation.
Jon Winder	The town vote was for an April (May) meeting
Joel Auerbach	Save our town from profiteering administrators whose good intentions have too high a cost.
Gwen Simpkins	I oppose moving the Truro town meeting outside of Truro.
Drew Mirque	Please...Truro SB; stop the madness. Respect your community.
Melissa McCarthy	What is the motivation of the SB to go against the voters in town? Why are they so hostile?
Bill Israel	By what logic does the select board seek to insulate its citizens from its decision making?
Eleanor Collins	Please keep the Town Meeting in the place where Truro voters can access it and where it is a true expression of Democracy.
Francis Sullivan	Keep our town business in Truro
Joseph N Gibbons	Please honor the will of the people and keep the Town Meeting in Truro in the May timeframe.
Helen McNeil-Ashton	Truro has plenty of room in Central School playing field and also has the technology for remote participation. Brewster has solved the problem of small buildings for Town Meetings, so can Truro.
Peter Van Stratum	Keep our vote in Truro
Colette Swietnicki	A Truro Town meeting should take place in Truro. Duh!

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