



## community development partnership

*Creating opportunities for people to live, work, and thrive on the Lower Cape*

### Make your Voice Heard at Town Meeting

**“Supporting housing at Town Meeting means recognizing and using your power as a resident to make our communities welcoming for all who live here.**

Andrea Aldana  
CDP, Director of Housing Advocacy



Residents attend an outdoor town meeting

Town meeting season is in full swing on the Lower and Outer Cape. Last month Brewster, Orleans, Harwich and Provincetown wrapped up their Town meetings, while Eastham, Chatham, Wellfleet and Truro take place this month.

We are fortunate to live in a region that allows citizens to participate directly in our local government’s decision-making process. “The best thing about our Town Meeting form of government on the Lower Cape is that we all have the opportunity to have a major impact on our town’s policies including how we use land and how we help people afford to live here,” says Andrea Aldana, the CDP’s Director of Housing Advocacy.

While some meetings have already taken place, there are still opportunities for residents to get out and advocate for the issues that are meaningful to them. Attending your town’s Annual Meeting for the first time can be an intimidating, and sometimes overwhelming experience, but it is critically important that your voice is heard. “When we don’t show up, speak up or vote, we let other people make these decisions for us,” Andrea says.

In the last two years alone the eight Lower Cape Towns have committed nearly \$15,000,000 to housing initiatives. With real estate prices skyrocketing over the past year, calls to fund affordable housing are more urgent than ever. The results from May’s town meetings have yielded significant successes for housing initiatives. Brewster, Harwich, Orleans, and Provincetown have all allocated Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to affordable housing projects. Provincetown, Brewster, and Orleans transferred \$550,000 in CPA funds to their Affordable Housing Trusts; Harwich residents voted in favor of using over \$160,000 in CPA funds for housing.

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Solidifying their commitment to affordable housing, Brewster and Harwich voted to create housing coordinator positions. In addition, Brewster voters committed \$150,000 to their short-term rental assistance program while Provincetown set aside \$100,000 to pilot a program to help homeowners with critical repairs.

To fund the creation of affordable housing at the old Cape Cod 5 building, Orleans voted in favor of a \$2,000,000 expenditure. Voters also weighed in on the Governor Prence property, located on Route 6A in Orleans, approving \$2,475,000 to purchase the property with plans to utilize it for housing.

Chatham's June 12th meeting will include 10 housing related articles. Two seek to acquire or designate properties in town for affordable housing, and one will establish and fund a housing coordinator position. Voters will also decide whether or not to transfer \$1,000,000 from the Community Preservation Undesignated Fund to their Affordable Housing Trust.

Eastham will also meet on June 12th, and will seek to approve \$300,000 in CPA funding for their Affordable Housing Trust. Eastham's town warrant also includes funding for a housing coordinator position and committing \$100,000 to the project at the former Cape Cod 5 building in Orleans.

On June 26th, Wellfleet voters will discuss several important issues. One warrant article seeks to amend the town's accessory dwelling unit (ADU) by-law, making them easier to build, with the assumption that this will increase the town's rental stock. They are also seeking \$500,000 for their Affordable Housing Trust, and funding for a wastewater treatment facility at 95 Lawrence Road.

Lastly, Truro's town meeting, also on June 26th, will vote to allocate \$50,000 in CPA funding to their Affordable Housing Trust, and another \$25,000 for a housing consultant. Voters will discuss changing the town's Room Occupancy Excise Tax from 4% to 6% and using some of this revenue to establish a Housing Stabilization Fund to support affordable rental housing production and rehabilitation.

We hope everyone participates in their town's meeting. According to Andrea, "Supporting housing at Town Meeting means recognizing and using your power as a resident to make our communities welcoming for all who live here." Town Meeting warrants, as well as dates, times, and locations, can be found by [clicking here](#), or on your town's website.