

October 10, 2025

Dear Editor,

As I continue to try to stay on top of various committee meetings in Truro, I grow more impressed with the civility of discussions (for the most part) and credit the Select Board and the new Town Manager for this change in tone. It is nice.

While the tone is nice, the content of many key committee discussions is jaw-dropping and really concerning. The unifying threads are:

- overdevelopment of every lot in Truro, if possible
- the lack of comprehensive responses to what overdevelopment means for our water, our land, our environment, our economy, and our way of life
- a real disregard for what that means to the property owners of Truro and
- a persistent lack of control over spending, budget, and thus, over our taxes and tax burdens.

The committees of greatest concern right now are the Zoning Task Force, Truro Housing Authority, FinCom, Walsh2, and the Ad Hoc Building Committee. If left to their own devices – without voter action, as far as I can see – we will have lost Truro and become a Yarmouth-like bedroom community for Provincetown.

Using a phrase that captures my disbelief at what I am hearing, I start with the Zoning Task Force.

SAY WHAT?

Last year, we all had to deal with the Walsh Overlay District (WOD), a creation of the (Ad Hoc) Zoning Task Force, an appointed five-person committee whose main achievement so far is the questionable WOD. Questionable because the jury is out still on whether the basis of the vote, the WOD article content, and the impact are really what Truro understands and wants. We voted, sure, but it was a slim victory on a dubious basis and did we REALLY know what we signed up for when changes to zoning definitions and dimensions were not made explicit? I do not think so.

Now we have ZTF 2.0 - the North Truro Overlay Districts, aka the “Highland/Shore Focus Area.” Say What? Who talks like this about their own community if they really care about it? Truro is not a commodity - *it is our home!*

Two “zone areas” are proposed for the “Focus Area” - at the long stretch along Route 6 and 6A from the split near Atlantic Spice up to and near Knowles Heights. This is meant to make all the lots in the marked area re-zoned for multi-family dwellings, mixed commercial-residential use, 10-foot setbacks, small lots, small frontage, and more. The second is a more intense commercially-oriented zone running along and around the Highland Ave /Pond Road area in Pond Village. The first zone surrounds the second zone. I attach the map ZTF produced recently.

Advised by an expensive suburban zoning consultant who sees Truro as a suburban wannabe, the ZTF has decided it is in their power and responsibility to change the entire Zoning Bylaw! That is, to change Truro from a rural, low-density community to a bedroom extension of Provincetown by re-doing ALL zoning requirements for Truro. WOD was just a prelude, North Truro is only the next phase - we are now in for a

big ride on many fronts. **This self-determined zoning re-do is excessive and honestly, scary.** The ZTF Chair said when the Town Planner suggested they might be exceeding their charge and when others had different views and concerns about how far and how much of a total re-do is authorized or needed, “I say we suck it up, we do it.” Really?! Say what?

The ZTF is preparing dramatic, community-changing proposals for articles for ATM 2026. One idea recently floated at ZTF was to allow 3-acre lots to have three - yes, 3! - 3,600 sf houses without creating a subdivision or seeking a variance. That's a development, and it could be happening soon if this craziness is not stopped.

These ideas are just a few of dozens under consideration that will make North Truro unrecognizable and destroy an historic district. Add it to WOD and we see where these folks intend Truro to go: Every lot on Rt 6A available for multi-story, multi-family, multi-structure lots by right; every non-conforming lot made conforming; loss of abutters' rights to challenge or appeal; loss of Planning Board review; no budget estimates required for costly infrastructure; no consideration of what density increase in human water and waste mean to our wells, our drinking water, and our natural waters and habitats; traffic safety jeopardized, even as Rt 6 faces the State DOT “lane diet” in this area to slow traffic.

Is that what you want? I sure don't.

We have to ask WHY: What is the goal? How much housing does Truro really need to take care of Truro's residents? What about water, wastewater? What about our taxes? What about our history and our way of life?

The ZTF proposals will be made public this month but have already been hashed out at ZTF meetings. **We need to pay attention, get ready to act, and prepare ourselves to vote to preserve the Truro we love and live in by choice before Truro is made into a commodity to be over-developed or worse, sold off to developers.** This will not take care of Truro's residents but will take care of folks from other places.

I am happy to be a good neighbor for any reason, but especially if there is a real need I can help with. But this is not about our Truro neighbors' needs - it is the need of greed. Truro is on a mad rush to develop before we realize what has been set in motion.

Say what? Say, no way.

I once again ask for your attention, this time to the ZTF proposals so we get to live in the Truro we love, and not apologize for it, fight about it, go into debt to do that, or have to protect our reputations because we express our views. Thanks for listening.

Roberta Lema, Truro

**FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY
BY THE ZONING TASK FORCE**

