

January 16, 2025

To the Editor,

As a taxpayer of Truro, I am writing to express serious concerns regarding the lack of neutrality and accessibility of our town's Truro Talks Newsletter, particularly the Town Manager's report in the December 2024 edition. I believe certain statements within this report raise questions about the newsletter's objectivity and its intended purpose, impacting public trust in municipal communications.

My primary concern stems from statements regarding the DPW Study Group's proposal. The report asserted that the proposal's "inaccurate low-cost" figures swayed voters at Town Meeting, citing a conversation with a member of the Take Back Truro citizens group. This presents a specific viewpoint rather than objective information. Furthermore, linking this alleged inaccuracy to:

- 1) Question or Deny the Voter intent at the last Special Town Meeting and Annual Town Meeting Vote. The Voter intent was loud and clear: NO DPW building at 340/344 RT6 and Do a Design for a DPW building predominantly at Town Hall Hill.
- 2) Alleged calls for a "construction cost cap" supposedly made by two respected town groups that have long been targets of the Town Manager cites no evidence and further compromises the newsletter's neutrality.

Using the Truro Talks platform to express a particular position without a clear mechanism for opposing views is neither balanced nor transparent. While I appreciate the Town Manager's prompt response to my initial concerns, offering further discussion during "Coffee with the Town Manager" or office hours is not a sufficient substitute. This is like a false main story on page 1 while a retraction is buried in fine print in the middle of the newspaper.

This situation contradicts the stated rationale for creating Truro Talks in September 2021. The newsletter, words written by the same Town Manager, was established to provide "unfiltered Town content and news" to increase openness, accountability, and engagement. We seem to have regressed from these original goals.

If Truro Talks is intended to be a factual report of official town activities rather than a platform for expressing the Town Manager's opinions (which he can share at weekly "Coffee with the Town Manager" gatherings), it is not fulfilling its purpose.

One case in point is the December Town Manager's report. It needs to be revised to remove subjective statements and ensure neutrality, but how does that happen?

Since we are paying government employees who use municipal resources to produce Truro Talks, I believe the Select Board has a responsibility to foster effective governance with official communications that are accurate, clear, and balanced, and that we can take to represent the Select Board's views as well. Right now, it is clear what the Town Manager writes is strictly his opinion, and that misinformation he promulgates is his own doing, and not the official position of the Select Board. Perhaps he can clarify that for us in the future.

Sincerely,  
Michael Forgione