

We Face an Onslaught of Unknowns at ATM – Let's Make Smart Choices

April 7, 2025

via email to editor@truronews.org

Dear Editor,

I my last letter to the editor, I indicated that I watch most meetings of the Select Board and other committees that make recommendations to voters.

This year at ATM we face an onslaught of big-ticket expenditures and high impact actions that will have far reaching effects – and long after I am gone. They will change Truro forever, not because the majority want it but because a powerful but small group of officials in Truro – and it looks like, outside Truro, are willing to exploit Truro for its land and water – and really do not seem to be listening about the tax effects on us.

But the people of Truro will hopefully have other ideas about this.

I listened to the Select Board meetings on the Warrant for ATM, all the folks who presented, and read the articles. **These concern me and I hope voters do not take the plunge on these articles:**

- **Seasonal Communities designation** - We should not approve this because we do not know what the designation will impose on us or require from us. We do know that the regulations for Seasonal Communities won't be out until the Fall. As one person said: to accept this is like signing the signature page of a contract without having the rest of the contract in front of us. We lose NOTHING by waiting 'til we know if this will be good for Truro. We cannot and do not know that now.
- **Walsh Overlay District** - This is one of the worst examples of being asked to accept "expertise" in blind faith I can remember. This overlay district will make that area of Truro into something Truro never wanted - Walsh City. It includes provisions for houses 10 feet apart – three to a single lot! It provides for research facilities... Really??? It allows for commercial spaces that could kill our current small businesses, including mine. We already struggle for business. It gets worse - and the worst part is there is no mention of the impact of this on water. Many folks and two experts for Truro and P'town have said this site cannot be developed – and absolutely not in the ways this overlay proposal would allow-- if we want good drinking water for Truro and Provincetown. No water, no life.
- **There are others that bother me, too** – transfer tax, salaries in free cash, plowing private roads without knowing Town liability...but it would take too much space now to explain why.

I also want to ask my neighbors to support two citizens' petitions.

- **The DPW cost cap** - We have to insist on a budget cap for the new DPW and \$20M or less is the right cap. If we do not tell the Town about this now, we will get a DPW we have to vote down for cost next year. For heaven's sake, the DPW houses less than 10 employees and maybe 15 vehicles most of which can be stored outside, as they have been for decades. It is cheaper to buy 10 new trucks for \$250,000 each (which is a very high estimate) than to build storage space that will cost \$10 Million. We need taxes we can afford and with all the other projects Truro has in mind it is even more important to bring this expensive item to a realistic cost. The two schematic

designs recommended in this article force the cost reductions to be made, because other designs may cost less and the job. To get this second schematic now is easy and inexpensive.

- **Charter Revision about FinCom** - We need a FinCom that works for the voters, and nobody else. That is why they are appointed by the Town Moderator and not the Select Board. The Charter says that FinCom's job is to "advise the legislature"—that's us—the people that vote at ATM. We have seen what the cozy relationship between FinCom and the Select Board or Town Administration costs us – it contributed to a 50% increase in spending over the last five years. FinCom has to be our watchdog and we have to be able to trust it to bring sound financial recommendations to the voters. We cannot do that yet. We need to keep them off committees that bring money projects to Town Warrant unless State Law requires it. This article adds only three words and is just common sense. As a former FinCom member, I really endorse this article.

If we do this, we will have gotten a cleaner, better, safer and more affordable Truro for those of us who live here now. Thanks for listening.

Roberta Lema, Truro

PS: I think the **solar array article** is great - it will make us money and create electricity to serve us all over time.