

Dear Editor,

May 22, 2024

In one week, we face the most important election for Select Board, certainly in recent times. Like many, I have been asked repeatedly about which candidates I support. I have a different question, and I would ask the candidates for their thoughts first, as these pertain to the candidates' campaigns. In some ways, this is both a letter to the editor and an open letter to the candidates themselves. With great respect for the courage it takes to stand in leadership, I request a serious response.

One of the four candidates for Select Board has been under siege while the other three have been left unscathed by an attack that includes tactics never before used in Truro - removal of campaign road signs, fake surveys, misleading video clips out of context, a scripted echo chamber, personal slanders, and most recently, the shocking theft of "source code" to double down on untrue reports of alleged right-wing extremism on the part of one candidate. Theft of source code can be considered theft of intellectual property - a copyright infringement and possibly a cybercrime. It involved highly skilled and intentional hacking of a private website. THAT is how far one person and his allies are willing to go to make sure that two of three other candidates will win this race.

For me, this moment was crossing the Rubicon, a potential point of no return for Truro. I believe if we remain silent about this descent into such indecent campaign tactics, we will not recognize ourselves on the other side. It has nothing to do with our policy positions and everything to do with our character, as a community and as candidates. At what point does a community draw a line and say "enough?" For me, I have reached that point. I know I am not alone.

So, I ask a different question of each candidate: As a candidate for Select Board, are you willing to win this race riding on the juggernaut of this unprecedented, untruthful and (so far) unchecked assault on another candidate? I ask this bluntly because we are out of time - we are approaching a fork in the road where silence in the face of such toxic behavior may set a new low standard for decency, civility, civil discourse.

To my knowledge there has been no candidate (except the one under attack) crying foul, calling for this to stop, or in any other way standing up for decency, diversity, or fairness. We do not have to agree to know that we should all have an equal and fair shot to speak truthfully and be heard – and elected.

This silence is not solely the problem nor responsibility of you as candidates; but unlike the rest of us, your silence on targeting one of your own [as candidates] benefits you – indeed, one

candidate taken out improves the chances of winning on May 29th. But the cost of winning this way is not worth it.

Some will say this is politics. I ask, "Is this Truro politics now and in the future?" God help us if the answer is "yes."

Will you openly call for a cessation of these tactics? Will you openly stand for truthful and respectful treatment of each other and yourselves? Will you make "healing" a real option? Or will it remain a slogan?

Citizens will want to see you keep your word to "lead with civility" or "hold other board members accountable," "respect and serve all members of the community" or "restore trust in government" - not hear these as campaign throw-aways. Will you individually or together demand an end to this dreadful way of challenging each other?

We deserve to know what kind of Truro we can expect moving forward. We can survive policy differences, but I doubt if we can recover from these current "rules of engagement." Please be silent no more. I appreciate your response and will make sure to share them verbatim.

Thank you.

R. Bruce Boleyn