

To the Editor,

February 6, 2026

In the last *Truro News*, I submitted a letter about the need for WOD to truly honor our Walsh votes in 2024. I thought it might help readers to better understand why the Walsh 2024 recommendations and the current Walsh Overlay District (WOD) cannot be reconciled without major changes to WOD. I am not a technical expert, but anyone can read and compare the WOD zoning regulations with the Walsh 2024 recommendations. Doing so confirms what I said last month:

In April 2025 before ATM 2025, voters were re-assured by [Town Land Use Counsel](#) that the ZTF's WOD article was "entirely consistent with the Walsh Committee recommendations" (in Article 5). This is clearly not the case.

The differences raised enough concern that I decided to look directly at the WOD regulations — not the summaries or talking points, but the actual bylaws. I believe everyone in town could benefit from doing the same. Here is my "crib sheet" of the key regulations and impacts.

The **narrative section of the WOD (§40.9.1 Purpose & Intent)** initially sounds reassuring — almost like a continuation of Article 5 from the year before. If you only read the narrative, you'd think the WOD implemented what voters had already approved in 2024.

But the narrative is not what controls development at Walsh. The **Use Table (§40.9.4)** and the **Dimensional & Density provisions (§40.9.3)** do control —and they are very different from what voters intended and approved in 2024.

Under WOD there is:

- **No 160-unit maximum** (Article 5 cites a 160-unit cap; WOD contains no cap)
- **No phasing requirement** (required in Article 5 §5.3.2; omitted in WOD)
- **No water-resource and protection requirements before development** (required in Article 5 §5.3.4; omitted in WOD)
- **No dimensional limits** — no maximum building size, footprint, WMS-45 ft high (§40.9.3)
- **No maximum commercial square footage** — "Retail, General" has no size limit (§40.9.4)

And here's the part most people may not realize: As long as a building is 67% residential by floor area (§40.9.2), **the remaining 33% commercial portion can be any size.**

The other items in WOD, like very small minimum setbacks, no frontage minimums and the like are also meant to maximize density. With what WOD also allows, it is highly conceivable to build large apartment-like structures split between 67% residential and 33% retail within the same structure.

To make this real:

- A typical rural **Walmart Supercenter** is about **105,000 sq ft**. As a single story, that's roughly **300 ft × 350 ft**. . Because WOD allows commercial space below grade (§40.9.3.2) and Truro defines a "story" only as space above mean grade (Truro Zoning Bylaw §10.4), a Walmart-

sized store could fit by right within a 315,000 sq ft, 4–5 story mixed-use building of about 230 x 300 sf that meets the 67% residential requirement..

- An **Ocean State Job Lot–type store (~ 49,500 sq ft)** could also fit by right in a 150,000 sq ft mixed-use building on a single floor roughly 225 ft × 220 ft. (§40.9.4)
- **Either of these mega-stores could easily fit in the Moderate Density Subdistrict (MDS),** where no Special Permit is required — only Site Plan Review, which cannot be denied if zoning is met.

Some will say this could never happen in Truro. But it can now. This is exactly what the WOD allows.

This is not what voters were led to believe by the WOD narrative, and it is certainly not what voters approved in Article 5 in 2024.

It's also troubling that the Provincetown Select Board stated publicly that Truro's former Town Manager asked them **not to discuss water before the WOD vote** — even though Article 5 required water planning (§5.3.4) and the WOD removed it. We're now seeing the fallout in the current water conflict with Provincetown and growing concern over infrastructure costs and impacts to our character and pocketbooks.

We also cannot ignore the **Seasonal Communities designation under M.G.L. c.40A §3A.** If Truro does not increase density fast enough, the Attorney General can impose zoning changes that override local intent. This is a **real and immediate vulnerability**, made worse by the mismatch between the WOD narrative and its actual Use and Dimensional provisions.

Truro deserves zoning that reflects what voters approved in 2024 — not a falsely comforting narrative paired with aggressive and complex regulations that say otherwise. We must also reckon with the fact that information was deliberately withheld at the former Town Manager's request and mis-stated by the Town Planner before ATM, and that decision-making around Walsh has been concentrated in too few hands. We need broader SB participation and transparency.

The Select Board needs to act this year. **Either amend the WOD** so it truly reflects the 2024 vote **or better still, rescind WOD** so the town can plan comprehensively and at intended scale for Walsh. In fact, development consistent with Article 5 may not require an overlay district at all — existing zoning would suffice without these radical changes and their impacts on water, traffic, safety, the environment, not to mention our taxes and our peace of mind.

Finally, while the Select Board controls Town land, **only voters control zoning.** And only the ZBA — not the Select Board — enforces WOD zoning. Yet, importantly, the Select Board has the authority to place an Article on the Warrant to rescind the WOD. Doing so would demonstrate that citizens — not developers or special interests — come first.

Sincerely,
Pamela Wolff