

EDITORIAL

Carrots and sticks for Wellfleet ATM articles

Wellfleet's 2017 Annual Town Meeting, which begins at 7 p.m. on Monday, promises to offer a variety of lively debates. We hope the town makes choices that lead to a cleaner and healthier environment, reasonable and effective zoning laws, and a firm statement of principle on the current immigration hysteria.

Article 27, the Beach Recycling Pilot Program, is a long-overdue initiative that deserves support in spite of the Keystone Cop fumbling by its planners, as reported in last week's Banner. We believe recycling bins can be installed at the town's beaches, Marina and recreation areas — and on Main Street as well — for less than the \$50,000 that is requested, and we hope town officials will get a grip and make it happen this year.

Article 31, the Polystyrene Reduction Bylaw, is a worthy and forward-thinking proposal to raise awareness of the harmful effects of this material and to phase out the use of certain polystyrene plastics by June 1, 2018. Reducing the global plague of plastic that is choking our marine and terrestrial environments is something we can all take part in by acting locally.

Article 37, repealing Wellfleet's Formula Business Bylaw, is on the warrant again this year after failing to get the needed two-thirds majority last year. Although they promised to do it, the members of the planning board failed to produce a revised version of the bylaw that would have a better chance of standing up in court. The board is clearly more interested in abandoning the Formula Business Bylaw than fixing it. The bylaw should stay on the books until it is rewritten.

Article 38, amending the Zoning Bylaw to regulate food trucks, is an attempt by the planning board to use zoning in a way that is inappropriate. Zoning laws regulate the use of land; they should not be twisted into a clumsy tool to control a business that by definition moves from place to place. Food trucks are already subject to health regulations and licensing restrictions, which works perfectly well in virtually every other town in the commonwealth. Vote no on this one.

Article 46, making Wellfleet a "safe community," asks the selectmen to authorize all town officials to refrain from using the town's resources for the enforcement of federal immigration laws unless presented with a criminal warrant or other evidence of probable cause. It is essentially a restatement of a resolution passed unanimously by the Annual Town Meeting in the wake of the U.S.A. Patriot Act in 2001. It does not authorize the harboring of criminals (being an undocumented resident is not a crime) and it does not expose the town to the potential loss of federal funds for harbor dredging or other important projects. Though we don't think immigrants will be pushed out of Wellfleet, a yes vote is warranted.

Articles 47 and 48, on the Herring River Restoration Project, were submitted by petition in an attempt to derail this meticulously researched and designed effort. The herbicide question in Article 48 has already been resolved, while the question of insurance in 47 is little more than a red herring. Both petitions should be rejected.

PROVINCETOWN BANNER

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PROVINCETOWN BANNER (USPS 013-525) is published weekly by GateHouse Media NE, 167 Commercial St. Provincetown MA 02657. Periodicals postage paid at Provincetown MA and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: send address changes to: Provincetown Banner, GateHouse Media NE, 400 Crown Colony Dr., Quincy MA 02169.
 Incorporating The Advocate, The Provincetown Advocate and The Wellfleet Advocate.

Deadlines: Display Advertising, Friday 3 p.m.; Classifieds, Monday noon; Letters, Monday noon

Lines in the Sand by Sage Stossel



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wellfleet should address climate change

To the editor:
 Last week I attended a hearing for the proposed underground fuel storage license at Cumberland Farms in Wellfleet. I am a patron of Cumberland Farms and am supportive of the business. That said, I was pleased that the selectmen voted not to issue the fuel storage license, citing concerns over traffic safety and the proximity of Duck Creek in the event of an oil spill. These are very real and important concerns and I applaud the selectmen for taking them into consideration.

I was disappointed, however, to hear that climate change and our need to move swiftly away from fossil fuel infrastructure was not part of the discussion. I asked if there were plans to install an electric vehicle charging station as part of the renovation; both the selectmen and the attorney for Cumby's said that had not been considered.

Numerous scientific studies indicate that if we continue with business as usual, the world will warm four degrees Celsius — more than twice the agreed upon "safe" upper limit of two degrees from the Paris climate accords — between 2060 and 2100. These numbers are abstract, but the implications are terrifying: a world four degrees warmer will be unable to support our current population and will be plagued with famine, violence, extreme storms and drought.

If we do not move swiftly toward a zero emissions economy — within the next decade or so — the world could warm to the agreed upon "climate danger" threshold of two degrees by the time my children are graduating from high school.

My husband and I are both in our 30s, and our children are two and five. Climate change is a global issue, and I recognize our

town's control reaches only so far. But every decision matters. Our generations cannot afford continued investment in fossil fuel. We need new infrastructure built to support electric vehicles and renewable energy, and we need it now.

Wellfleet talks a lot about the need to attract and retain young families. One way to do so would be to make climate change part of the conversation and take bold action to protect our future, our children and our home.

Elsbeth Hay
 Wellfleet

Vote No on Wellfleet Article 47

To the editor:
 Article 47 on the Annual Town Meeting warrant, if passed, would put Wellfleet and the Herring River Restoration Project (HRRP) in an impossible bind. It calls on the town not to approve permits for the restoration work unless insurance or a special fund for unexpected mishaps has been set up. Article 47 is a thinly disguised effort calculated to cause the project to be abandoned. I am an abutter to the Herring River flood plain. The project has been able to specifically determine which private properties contain structures that would be adversely affected by a full re-introduction of tidal water. Engineering studies and sophisticated evaluations of data show that about two dozen properties have structures at risk. The project will offer each affected homeowner custom mitigation work to protect these structures, at the project's expense. If a homeowner does not want to accept mitigation, the water level on his or her property will not be increased to the point where the structure would be

OP-ED

Remedy Truro's housing crisis by OK'ing Article 17

By State Sen. Julian Cyr

Truro has an opportunity to begin to rectify the dire need for rental housing that our community faces. I strongly urge my fellow Truro voters to support the amended Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw, Article 17, at Town Meeting on Tuesday.

Maybe it's spring fever, but I feel a genuine sense of renewal — and youth — in our little town. North Truro has had a renaissance thanks to the sweat equity of several young businesses owners. Truro Center is headed in that direction with new proprietors at Jams and the success of the summer farmers'

market. The next generation has taken the reins at the local garden center, teaches at the school, serves on the police force and plows our roads for the dept. of public works.

Yet as I reflect on my former Truro Center School classmates who are driving this renewal, a common thread is painfully obvious: most of us are able to live in Truro only because our families have a foothold here. And a lot of us haven't been able to stay. In the first decade of this century, Truro's population of 20 to 44 year olds has dropped by a staggering 50 percent. This is a dramatic departure from the favorable conditions that existed for our

parents' generation, where hard-working people of all backgrounds could move to Truro and make a life in the building trades, in hospitality, or as a fisherman, artist or eccentric.

As these trends — driven by an out-of-whack real estate market — accelerate, Truro will increasingly find itself comprised of isolated older adults surrounded by homes that are unoccupied most of the year. Left unchecked, we go into demographically uncharted territory. That's not much of a community.

The amended Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw is a thoughtful proposal that will encourage

homeowners to create small year-round, market-rate rental units. Small units will limit environmental disturbance while meeting the immediate housing needs for people like me who want to make a life here. While an affordable accessory dwelling bylaw is on the books, it is too restrictive and has gone virtually unused. The amended bylaw will help recently hired town employees find housing and will begin to stabilize the shrinking school population. It will also allow those of us who grew up here a chance to stay, and a means for older adults like my parents to downsize and remain.

For those skeptical about this

proposal, I urge you not to let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Accessory dwellings have been built in other Cape towns, and the same can happen in Truro.

Article 32 to limit building size in Truro's Cape Cod National Seashore District also merits support. The proposed limits will ensure that privately-owned properties remain in harmony with the landscape. This is our best shot to stem house size and retain "old Cape Cod" for future generations.

— Julian Cyr is state senator for the Cape & Islands district and a resident of Truro.

LETTERS

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affected. Monitoring will enable the HRRP to check data indicating what is going on as the tide is increased slowly over several years. Sophisticated controls on the new dike will enable the HRRP to slow the tide, or stop it completely. Years of hard work by dedicated scientists and environmentalists brought us to the point where it seems that the restoration will become a reality. If we walk away from this undertaking now we may never again be able to re-create what these professionals have accomplished.

Please vote "No" on Article 47.

Gail Ferguson
Wellfleet

Wellfleet Town Hall's trees

To the editor:
Why kill those trees?

Iris Sands
Wellfleet

Make Wellfleet a 'safe community'

To the editor:

We are being asked at Wellfleet's Annual Town Meeting on April 24 to take a communal stand that will publicly reflect what we value as a town. And it will be a moral decision.

The idea of being a "safe community" for immigrants has wrung outrage from some Americans, pride from others, and fear across both lines.

Wellfleet, like the other Outer Cape communities, is hardly a hotbed of crime and terrorism committed by "illegals." The chances of our police force having to hand over a load of visa-less criminals, or our neighbors hiding them, are minute at best.

Ours is not an issue of local public safety. For this reason we are free to consider the name "safe community" in terms of its symbolic power alone.

This is our chance to gently but firmly join with towns and cities across the continent to resist fierce federal overreach. To say we as a

town uphold the right of all of us in Wellfleet to be equally protected under our Constitution no matter what our immigration status.

Please, voters, read Article 46 on the Town Meeting warrant and you'll see "safe" is not the same thing as harboring criminals.

Ellen Raquel LeBow
Wellfleet

Short-term rentals should be taxed

To the editor:

The sharing economy is changing the way the world does business, delivering new options for consumers and extra income for service providers like those who occasionally rent out space in their homes on a short-term basis. That's a good thing. But as these new technologies continue to change the way we do business and procure goods and services, it remains incumbent on our elected representatives to make sure that regulations keep pace with this evolution.

As new technology emerges, reasonable regulations designed to protect public safety and ensure equal access and fair taxation must be updated. The Mass. Lodging Association offers our gratitude to Gov. Charlie Baker and legislators who are working for a state solution, including Rep. Sarah Peake, who has been a leader on this issue. We look forward to working with the legislature and municipalities in their effort to protect these important public interests.

Our organization represents hotels, motels, resorts, inns and bed and breakfasts comprising more than 80,000 rooms across the Commonwealth while contributing more than \$20 billion to our state's economy, collecting more than \$800 million in state and local taxes and employing more than 135,000 at our properties. Our operators understand the industry's role in protecting the safety of our guests, respecting the rules of the communities in which we operate, and ensuring our properties are welcoming places for all who wish to visit.

Short-term rental services offer yet another welcome option to the

mix of consumer choices. With appropriate and reasonable taxation and regulation, platforms like Airbnb can continue to thrive in Massachusetts while contributing their fair share and offering the same important protections traditional lodging businesses offer our customers.

Paul Sacco
Sandwich
President Mass. Lodging
Association

Truro ATM Article 33 is a hoax

To the editor:

There are two articles on Truro's Town Meeting warrant relating to residential building size.

Article 32 would limit the size of houses in Truro's Seashore district.

Article 33 purports to extend the same limitations in the Seashore district article townwide.

Article 32 is a growth control bylaw. Article 33 is a hoax.

Article 33 claims to limit growth when in fact it shifts all responsibility for growth control to the zoning board of appeals. All of the building restrictions carefully developed in the Seashore district bylaw are listed in Article 33. Article 33 even throws in an additional set of numbers showing limits ranging from 4,100 square feet to 6,000 square feet. Of course these numbers could range from 10,000 to 60,000, or any number greater or less or in-between, because Article 33 is not a growth limitation bylaw. It is a kick the whole issue over to the ZBA bylaw.

The ZBA's sole criterion for residential building size is its opinion as to whether the proposal is fitting given the "size of the neighboring buildings and the surroundings in which construction is proposed."

Opinions differ; differing opinions are the stuff of lawsuits.

Is Article 32 the solution to all of Truro's growth issues? Of course not. But it is finally a beginning.

Please, at Town Meeting, don't kick the can on this issue. Let us begin to control the future shape of our community. Vote for Article 32.

Gary Palmer
Truro

Truro ATM articles 32 and 33 are not the same

To the editor:

In last week's Banner, Ben Gagnon reported that two proposed zoning articles for the Truro Annual Town Meeting Warrant were "almost identical." That may seem so to your reporter, but they are not. The essential difference is this: Article 32 caps house sizes within the Cape Cod National Seashore, clearly putting a limit on house size proportional to lot size. This proposed bylaw has been in development since July 2015, and has benefitted from public hearings and informational sessions. Article 33, which ostensibly puts a similar cap on house size for residential and Seashore districts, takes the decision-making away from the voters and leaves the determination of appropriate house size to the discretion of six or seven people on the zoning board of appeals. This petitioned article appeared last month in an apparent hasty attempt to remove the control of house size from Truro voters and give it to the ZBA. In my opinion, it leaves things exactly where they are now and is not a solution to stem the size of houses within either district.

Many of us are dismayed by the big homes mushrooming in Truro's residential district. Case in point: the nearly 10,000-square-foot house approved by the ZBA on Cooper Road. I have complete trust that if given some time, the Truro Planning Board can draft a zoning bylaw for the residential district that the voters can approve. Article 33 is not it.

Maureen Burgess
Truro

CPC grant can save Twine Field

To the editor:

On Tuesday at Annual Town Meeting, Truro citizens will vote on the Truro Community Preservation Committee's recommendation to grant \$200,000 to the Truro Conservation Trust. The money will help the Trust buy and preserve the 10-acre Twine Field off Pond

Road, protecting it from development. This particular open space is a rare ecological and historical Truro treasure.

Twine Field is an upland meadow — the rarest habitat on the Cape. Upland meadows are an ecosystem of hardy, long-seasoned, deep-rooted plants and fortunate animals. Tor Hansen, Pond Road's own naturalist, has documented more than 100 species of amphibians, reptiles, mammals, insects and butterflies, as well as 94 species of birds that receive both food and shelter from Truro's Upland Twine Field Meadow.

The meadow is steps away from conservation land behind Pond Road, reaching to Route 6A. Joining these already preserved lands with a preserved Twine Field will provide a safe corridor and a larger refuge for animals. If Twine Field goes, the animals will go, deprived of food and shelter.

Both the roots of the woods behind the meadow and the meadow's plants, some of them with roots six feet deep, provide a natural filtering system that washes out dangerous nutrients that can pollute Pilgrim Pond and our groundwater. The proposed development will replace this purifying filter with septic systems, large summer homes and a 40-foot-wide road entering narrow Pond Road.

Research has found that only two twine fields remain on Cape. Once, every fishing village on Cape Cod had its twine field. Chatham bought and preserved its twine field in 2015. Truro's is the other last known twine field. It, too, needs to be preserved. Pond Village and Pond Road, which includes the Upland Twine Field Meadow, are eligible for listing as a National Register Historic District. To preserve this rare ecological and historic Truro treasure would be a great gift to the present and future community of Truro. Voters have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make this happen by voting on April 25 to approve the recommendation of Truro's Community Preservation Committee.

Mary Ann Larkin
North Truro