

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.