

AD HOC TOWN SEAL COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Meeting #2

Thursday, March 27, 2025

at 9:00am

In person

Truro Public Library

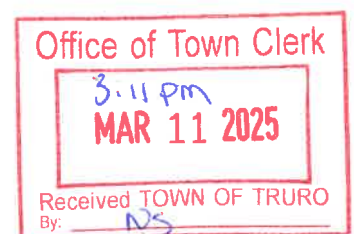
Cobb Room

(use rear entrance as meeting time is prior to library's open hours)

This meeting is open to the public.

1. Approve minutes from February 28, 2025 meeting
2. Confirm meeting schedule and protocols (Holly Gardner)
3. Public comment (3 minute time limit)
4. Discuss and possibly approve draft of the Goals (Chris Nagle)
5. Discuss and possibly approve draft of the Work Plan (Holly Gardner)
6. Brief overview of Yarmouth process (Katie Riconda)
7. Distribution of historical info from Town vault (Nicole Tudor)
8. Brief overview of *Providence Independent* coverage of town seals (Peter Cook)
9. Brief overview of historical research (Apryl Shenk)
10. Brainstorm: begin list of stakeholders from whom to gather input (Committee)
11. Adjournment

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 8, 2025 via Zoom



AD HOC TOWN SEAL COMMITTEE



Committee Goals

1st Draft – for Discussion on 3/27/25

1. Recommend a revised Town Seal design to Town Meeting in 2026.
2. Establish a transparent and collaborative process for developing a revised Town Seal.
3. Cast a wide net for stakeholder input at outset.
4. Synthesize input to reflect the Town's values and aspirations in a professional way.
5. Correct/eliminate inaccuracies of current seal.
6. Deliver a timeless design that will be relevant for decades.
7. Ensure effectiveness for all usage applications across Town departments and media.
8. Adhere to professional design standards and technical best practices.
9. Comply with Massachusetts Law and legal requirements.

AD HOC TOWN SEAL COMMITTEE



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

General Law, Title VII, Chapter 40, Section 47: Town seal; establishment; use

Section 47. Each town shall have a seal, established at a town meeting, to be kept by the town clerk. Papers or documents issued from any office or board of the town may be attested therewith. Cities which had an authorized seal in use on May tenth, eighteen hundred and ninety-nine, may continue to use such seal until changed by ordinance, and other cities shall by ordinance establish a seal of the city and designate the custodian thereof.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 1900

167

REBS,
1900
ART. 18
VOLUME
B

Voted

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Voted

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any legislation which will tend to injuriously affect said fishing interests; and we trust your Honorable Bodies will not allow unwise and oppressive laws to be enacted which will weaken an industry of such importance as that of weir-fishing in Cape Cod Bay. That a copy of the above Resolutions be forwarded to our Representative in General Court praying his interest and efforts in our behalf.

To table article 16 of the warrant

To take up article 18 of the warrant

To instruct the Selectmen to provide a seal for use of the town, as required by the Acts of 1899, Chapter 256.

To table article 18 of the warrant

To take up article 20 of the warrant

To elect a Free Warden by acclamation, and Willard M. Swall was elected and sworn by the Town Clerk Feb. 5, 1900.

To table article 20 of the warrant

To take up article 19 of the warrant

That the town appropriate the sum of \$200 for the repair and improvement of the road on the north side of Panuk River from the town dyke to the Ballston Beach Cottages. (Passed in writing)

To table article 19 of the warrant

To take up article 6 of the warrant

To take a recess of one hour, from 12 o'clock noon, until 1 o'clock P.M.

At one o'clock P.M. the meeting commenced agreeable to vote of adjournment and proceeded to business.

To instruct the Selectmen to control and regulate the eel fishing in Pond the ensuing year and prosecute or cause to be prosecuted by the eel warden, all violations of the rules and regulations to the extent of the law.

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Slade, Cynthia (Truro)

From: Couture, Eileen (Southampton)
To: All Clerks
Cc:
Subject: Town Seal Answers
Attachments:

Sent: Tue 7/27/2010 9:26 AM

Thanks to all of you who contacted us.

We went on line for the history of town seals and found the answer at www.burlington.org/archives. There is the history of the town seal, its general background and legal background.

The earliest mention of town seals is Chapter 205, Section 26 of the Public Statutes of Massachusetts of 1881.

Whoever, without being duly authorized thereto, prints, stamps or affixes, or causes to be printed stamped, engraved, or affixed to any paper or other article a representation of the seal of a city or town in this commonwealth, with intent to give to such paper or article an official character which it does not possess, or, without being duly authorized thereto, and with intent to assume an official character which he does not possess, casts, stamps, engraves, makes or has in his possession a badge or thing in the likeness of an official badge of (a) officer appointed by a city or town in this commonwealth, or by any department of such city or town, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding fifty dollars. (vi)

The first statutory requirement to create and adopt a town seal was passed April 29, 1898. Chapter 389, Section 2 of the Acts of 1898

Every town shall provide for the use of its town clerk an official seal, bearing the name of the town and the date of its incorporation, and of such general design as may be approved by the selectmen thereof. (vii)

Chapter 256 of the Acts of 1899 repealed Chapter 389, Section 2 of the Acts of 1898 and specified that towns without a seal had one year to adopt one.

Within one year from the passage of this act every town not already having a seal shall, by such method as may be adopted by vote of the town at a meeting duly called for the purpose, establish a seal of the town, which seal shall be in the custody of the town clerk; and any paper or document emanating from officer or board of a town shall, whenever it seems necessary or desirable, be attested with the town seal (vii)

Chapter 25, section 28 of the Revised Laws of Massachusetts codified the previous actions into the following;

Each town shall have a seal, established at a meeting called for the purpose, which shall be in the custody of the town clerk. Papers or documents issued from any office or board of the town may be attested therewith. (ix)

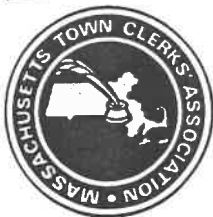
*Extracts from the General Laws, Page 69, Chapter 40, Section 47

Each town shall have a seal, established at a town meeting, to be kept by the town clerk. Papers or documents issued from any office or board of the town may be attested therewith. Cities which had an authorized seal in use on May tenth, eighteen hundred and ninety-nine, may continue to use such seal until changed by ordinance, and other cities shall by ordinance establish a seal of the city and designate the custodian thereof.

The creation of Southampton's town seal was voted in March of 1900.

This information was brought to our Board of Selectmen. They FINALLY realized that the town clerk was the keeper of the seal. The town clerk has instructed the web master to change the seal on the web page back to black and white. It hasn't happened as yet....

The Public Recorder



Office of Town Clerk
Treasurer - Tax Collector

DEC 20 1993

Received TOWN OF TRURO

Volume 43 No. 12

Published By The Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association December 1993

USE OF TOWN SEAL

The following Memorandum To Municipal Clients was provided by Joel B. Bard, Attorney At Law with the firm of Kopelman and Paige and the instructor for the educational course entitled "Court and The Town Clerk" held at the Fall Conference. The firm of Kopelman and Paige is Town Counsel to many communities and specializes in Municipal Law.

Memorandum To Municipal Clients

By Leonard Kopelman

Recently I have been asked questions relating to the use of a Town Seal. There are two statutes in the Massachusetts General Laws that relate to Town Seals. The first is Chapter 40, Section 47, which dates back to 1899. The statute states in full:

Each town shall have a seal, established at a town meeting, to be kept by the town clerk. Papers or documents issued from any office or board of the town may be attested therewith. Cities which had an authorized seal in use may continue to use such seal until changed by ordinance, and other cities shall by ordinance establish a seal of the city and designate the custodian thereof.

However, about the same time the Legislature passed Chapter 268, Section 35, which tells what happens with an unauthorized use of a Town Seal, including a representation of the Seal of a Town. That Section of the General Laws states in full:

Whoever, without being duly authorized thereto, prints, stamps, engraves or affixes, or causes to be printed, stamped, engraved or affixed to any paper or other article a representation of the seal of a town in the commonwealth, with intent to give to such paper or article an official character which it does not possess, or without being duly authorized thereto, and with intent to assume an official character which he does not possess, casts, stamps, engraves, makes or has in his possession a badge or thing in the likeness of an official badge of a police officer, member of a fire department, or other officer appointed by a town in the commonwealth, or by any department of such town, shall be punished by a fine of not more than fifty dollars.

This Section makes the wrongful use of the Seal a criminal violation. This leaves open the question of the use of the Town Seal by other than Government officials.

Obviously, there is nothing wrong with a T-shirt bearing the Town Seal, because it does not look like an official document. Some towns allow the League of Women Voters to use the Town Seal, but in my opinion the League of Women Voters is known nationally to be non-partisan and not a town body.

However, Concerned Citizen Groups have been using the Seal of different Towns, and in my opinion the use of a Town Seal by Concerned Citizens Groups or private brokerage firms, etc. might be considered to be an improper use of the Town Seal.



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TOWN SEAL (USE of)

Cynthia Slade

From: masstownclerks@googlegroups.com on behalf of Paul Gallagher
<Pgallagher@kingstonmass.org>
Sent: Thursday, September 20, 2018 11:40 AM
To: Lucia Longhurst; 'Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association'
Subject: Re: Town Seal

Mass General Laws, Part IV, Title 1, Chapter 268, Section 35

Section 35: Unauthorized use of town seal; making or possessing badge of town officer

Section 35. Whoever, without being duly authorized thereto, prints, stamps, engraves or affixes, or causes to be printed, stamped, engraved or affixed to any paper or other article a representation of the seal of a town in the commonwealth, with intent to give to such paper or article an official character which it does not possess, or, without being duly authorized thereto, and with intent to assume an official character which he does not possess, casts, stamps, engraves, makes or has in his possession a badge or thing in the likeness of an official badge of a police officer, member of a fire department, or other officer appointed by a town in the commonwealth, or by any department of such town, shall be punished by a fine of not more than fifty dollars.

Paul M. Gallagher
Town Clerk
Town of Kingston
26 Evergreen Street
Kingston MA 02364
pgallagher@kingstonmass.org
Office: 781-585-0502
Fax: 781-585-0547
Cell: 781-789-5636

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When writing or responding, please remember that the Secretary of State's Office has determined that email is a public record.

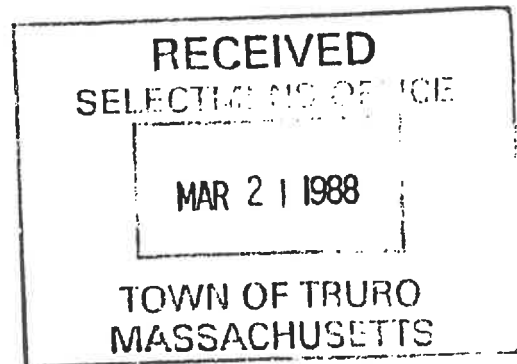
From: masstownclerks@googlegroups.com <masstownclerks@googlegroups.com> on behalf of Lucia Longhurst
<llonghurst@nortonmaus.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 20, 2018 11:28:44 AM
To: 'Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association'
Subject: Town Seal

Hi All

Joseph Yannai
P.O. Box 897
Ansonia Station
New York, NY 10023

Mayor of Truro
Town Hall Road
Truro, MA 02666

March 14, 1988



Dear Mayor:

We are conducting research on the origins of the names of every town and city in the United States.

We would appreciate it if you could send us information that would furnish us with every possible detail concerning Truro. Pertinent data includes the following:

1. The reason for naming Truro, Truro.
2. The date it was named.
3. How the name was decided upon.
4. Whether a previous name (or names) existed. If yes,
5. When and why the name was changed.
6. The presiding mayor at the time the name of Truro was given and the name of the current mayor.
7. The population of Truro when the name was given and its present population.


We would also greatly appreciate it if you could send us some general details about Truro and a copy of the official emblem.

If there is any cost for sending this material, please bill us and we will be happy to pay for it.

Your prompt response will help us to include Truro in our research. When the research is published in the form of a book, we will advise you at once.

Thank you again for your cooperation.

Very truly yours,


Joseph Yannai



*from Carol
4/4/88
D*

TRURO, MASSACHUSETTS 02666

March , 1988

Mr. Joseph Yannai
P. O. Box 897
Ansonia Station
New York, New York 10023

Dear Mr. Yannai:

Your letter regarding historical background of names of towns and cities of the United States has been forwarded to me.

I have drawn on the following sources for information:

1. Shebnah Rich's "History of Truro - Landmarks and Seamarks"
2. Vital Records of Truro, Massachusetts (Bowman - 1934)
3. Town Clerk's Records of Proprietors of the Town of Truro
4. Years of reading and research in sources too numerous to list during my 40 years (1942-1982) as the elected Clerk of the Town of Truro.

Located on Cape Cod, County of Barnstable, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Town of Truro was first explored by a group of men from the ships company of the English vessel, Mayflower.

These Pilgrims, so-called, had fled their native England because of religious and political differences with those then in power. They detoured for a brief stay in Holland, but again, cultural and religious problems forced them to re-embark for the New World of America. The Mayflower, after a stormy and hazardous voyage of 34 days, arrived in the sheltered harbor of what is now Provincetown, on November 19, 1620, and here the free men of the ships' company and passengers, composed and set their signatures to the famous "Mayflower Compact" a document guaranteeing, among other rights, "the framing of just and equal laws, acts, constitutions and offices....as shall be thought most meet....for the general good of the colony", so thus was enacted the first document of democratic government in the New World.

However, a three-day expedition of exploration on the outer peninsula, carried out under horrendous weather and harassment by unfriendly Indians, together with an apparent lack of copious water supply, so discourages the group that, at the encouragement of Myles Standish and other leaders, the Mayflower then sailed across the Bay to the harbor of the present Town of Plymouth, where after near starvation, epidemic illness, and a decimation of their numbers, the colony finally took root and slowly prospered.

The Cape was gradually settled from Plymouth to the outer tip of the peninsula in the following (7) seven decades. Nauset (later Eastham) was incorporated as a town in 1646, and from Eastham, several lower Cape towns were subdivided (Brewster, Wellfleet and Truro).

First mention of Truro as a separate town is in the form of a declaration dated at Eastham on June 30, 1696, indicating that the northern precinct of Eastham be under the control of "Proprietors," VIZ. Paine, Snow, Hopkins, Doane, Savage and Cole. There followed a period of a dozen years during which Truro gradually weaned itself from the mother town.

Division and allocation of the "Great Lots," so-called, was made among sundry proprietors; a crude highway system was mapped, fishing rights and other compacts with the Pamet Indians were enacted.

It is during this period (1696-1709) that vital town records of the two towns were co-mingled. Having reached a desired level of population, Truro appealed to the Colony for separation, and, having secured the services of an ordained minister and established a rudimentary educational system (both required for incorporation), the Town of Truro received its Charter in 1709.

Truro is named for the cathedral city of Truro, Cornwall, England. At one point in time, the name Dangerfield had been informally considered, but was rejected.

Town officers of Truro in 1709 were: Thomas Paine, clerk; Benjamin Small, Humphrey Scammon, and Isaac Snow, Selectmen.

Population figures for the Town of Truro reflect the effects of war (the town was blockaded by the British in both the Revolution and the War of 1812) by fluctuations in the fishing industry, by catastrophic storms that destroyed the fleet and related industries, and the shoaling of Truro's only harbor of shelter, and sole access to deep water.

Families in large numbers emigrated to more prosperous locations on the mainland, after abandoning their homesteads.

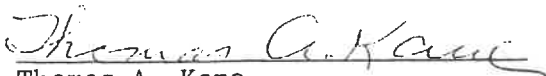
Samplings of census figures are as follows:

1765	Colonial	924
1800	U.S.	1152
1850	"	2051
1875	Mass.	1098
1900	U.S.	767
1925	Mass.	504
Current - Town		1500+ (estimated summer increase 7-10 fold)

Economy of the Town at present is based chiefly on services connected with tourism and housing of retirees from off-Cape, i.e. building trades, caretaking, maintenance, municipal services, etc. Truro elects a 3-man Board of Selectmen, and operates under open town meeting government. Approximately 1/3 of our area is within the Cape Cod National Seashore, which was established in September of 1959. Property owners within the Seashore are entitled to all rights and privileges of those outside the Seashore, including rights of sale, deeding to heirs, etc.

I hope this information is beneficial in your research. Please feel free to contact me if I may be of further assistance in this matter.

Very truly yours,



Thomas A. Kane
Town Clerk (ret.)
Truro, Massachusetts

TAK/cac



TRURO, MASSACHUSETTS 02666

The Town Seal was officially adopted in 1900

It commemorates the expedition of the Pilgrim Fathers as per the date

Corn Hill, in the background, is the spot where the Pilgrims discovered and appropriated corn stored by the Pamet Indians, one of which can be seen staring at the Mayflower in the distance.

Thomas A. Kane

Town Seal

Ad Hoc Town Seal Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 28, 2025
9am Zoom Meeting

Present: Holly Ballard-Gardner, *Chair*
Peter Cook, *Vice-Chair*
Chris Nagle, *Clerk*
Sue Lichtenstein, *Member*
Isadora Medley, *Member*
Apryl Shenk, *Alternate*
Stephanie Rein, *Select Board liaison*
Nicole Tudor, *Town Hall liaison/support*
Kelly Clark, *Asst. Town Manager*

Called to order at: 9:00 am

Approval of Minutes

None – first meeting.

Activity Report

All attendees introduced themselves and the attending Town employees explained their roles. Nicole is the new Town Clerk and will be the Committee's Town Hall liaison, Stephanie is the Select Board liaison. Kelly Clark introduced herself as the Asst. Town Manager.

The charge of the committee was reviewed: to develop a revised Town Seal as required by Massachusetts State Law, to be the seal that signifies official business of the Town. The process will entail reviewing the existing seal and considering its cultural and historical accuracy, while developing an appropriate new representation of the Town. Also discussed was: engaging stakeholders so the committee understands the interests and concerns, using professional design services, and identifying areas of use for the seal across Town departments. The Committee is expected to provide progress reports to the Select Board on a quarterly basis and develop a town meeting warrant article for voter approval of the new seal.

Committee members introduced themselves at more length.

The election of officers occurred: Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk. By unanimous vote, Holly was elected Chair, Peter as Vice Chair, and Chris as Clerk. Chris agreed to assume this role for now, expecting to share the role with others. The Committee discussed holding twice-monthly, one-hour meetings – a mix of in-person and virtual meetings with the next meeting being in person at a time that a majority of members could attend, to be determined by a poll. The meetings will be open to the public.

Stephanie explained that the role of the "Alternate" is to participate in discussion but unable to vote. Staff mentioned that the Town would supply different staff support depending on each meeting's topics. Future meeting locations would be determined based on availability once the days and times are scheduled.

Old Business

None – first meeting.

New Business

Nicole is to send out a poll for scheduling meetings.

Peter will summarize *Provincetown Independent* articles regarding the current town seal for next meeting.

Apryl offered to bring historical information she has collected.

Holly will contact Katie Riconda about Yarmouth's seal update process and a potential presentation showing their process.

Nicole will scan historical information on the current seal.

Nicole and Katie Riconda will begin to compile a list of how and where the town seal is currently used.

All committee members will brainstorm potential stakeholders for the Committee to communicate with over the coming months and bring their ideas to the next meeting.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and voted on. Meeting was adjourned at 10am.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Nagle

Chris Nagle, *Clerk*