



Falmouth Democratic Town Committee Meeting: February 18, 2015

The meeting was called to order by **Scott Simenas**. **Judy Ziss** gave a brief presentation on attempts to save the Cape Wind Project. There will be a rally on the Commons in Boston and Saturday, February 28 at 1 pm to support the project. There is also a petition to sign which can be found at: www.betterfutureproject.org which supports the project. Members were urged to sign this petition if they support Cape Wind.

Scott introduced the speaker of the evening, **Andrew Gordon**, Community Organizer for Transportation for Massachusetts. This group is a diverse coalition of groups working together to “create safe, convenient, and affordable transportation for everyone in MA.” They advocate for funds for transportation to be spent wisely and fairly, for decisions about transportation which are transparent and accountable, and work to ensure that our system has sufficient resources to meet future needs. They work with the legislature, the governor and state administration, and local and regional leaders on



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these issues. They believe improving transportation will cut greenhouse gas emissions by providing low carbon transportation choices and seek to improve public health by promoting biking and walking improvements for city streets.

Andrew discussed the current situation in which Governor Baker wants to cut \$40 million from the transportation budget for the state. Since recent storms have badly affected the MBTA, these cuts would be drastic. Also affected could be plans for the Green Line extension, upgrades to rail cars, the south coast rail line, the rail to Cape Cod, the Bourne fly over plans, and any plans for a third Cape bridge. There is currently a \$400 million gap between what is funded and what is needed. This is partly because Question 1 on the fall ballot passed so that the gas tax is no longer tied to transportation funding. Also Governor Baker

was part of the group who previously advocated that the state use transportation funding to help finance the Big Dig. So transportation funding has been in a crisis mode for the past ten years.

Transportation for Massachusetts has produced a plan for the future for Governor Baker. The plan includes the following points: Project selection criteria to prioritize transportation projects; long range transportation planning so as to expand choices and access to transportation; public-private partnership development; and closing the gap in funding for transportation in the state. A 10 year plan is needed based on values of citizens in the Commonwealth. In general, there is a massive funding crisis in transportation across the state.

Why was **Andrew Gordon** speaking to the Democrats? He stated his group needs our ideas and support in order to move its agenda forward and advocate for our interests in the area of transportation. Therefore several town committee members asked questions and gave suggestions. Some wondered why the members of the legislature have failed to support transportation concerns. **Matt Patrick** mentioned that some in the legislature oppose any new taxes and also are career politicians who do not take risks. The gas tax now generates \$85 to \$95 million but that is inadequate. Besides being too low, the gas tax is regressive. **Matt** noted that all transportation systems require government subsidies. **Faire Goldstein** asked why have advocacy groups working on transportation issues if the issue was that no money was available. What could be done? **Andrew** noted that activism from groups like his that form coalitions with environmental groups and Chambers of Commerce are needed to make sure our voices are heard. People need to think of transportation not as a business, but a service. His group receives funding from membership dues (Falmouth could join as a town), and from other groups such as the Conservation Law Foundation. Some members spoke favorably of constructing a Bourne Bridge flyover similar to the Sagamore flyover. There was no support expressed for a third Cape bridge. Some members gave suggestions of other groups to ask for affiliation such as the Cape Downwinders who are worried about evacuation routes off the Cape in case of a disaster at the Plymouth Nuclear Plant. Tolls for the bridges, electronic license plate charges, naming rights for stations along the MBTA routes, etc. were suggested as money raising ideas.

Andrew suggested the following links for those interested in more detail on these issues:

<http://www.t4ma.org/resources/publications/> ---> this link will take you to all of our publications so if anyone else is interested, they can start there.

"The Next MassDOT"- <http://www.t4ma.org/site/wp-content/uploads/The-Next-MassDOT.pdf>

"Keeping on Track: Second (most recent) Progress Report on TFA 2013"- <http://www.t4ma.org/site/wp-content/uploads/Keeping-on-Track-Feb-2015.pdf>

Next FDTC meeting in March: Please note that our next monthly meeting is to be held at a **different time and place**. The meeting will be on Thursday, March 19th at 7 pm at the Bourne Veterans Memorial Community Center, 239 Maine St. in Buzzard's Bay. This will be a meeting with Senator Dan Wolf for discussion of the state of the Commonwealth, the future of the Democratic Party, and Cape issues for the 2015-2016 Legislative Session. The meeting is arranged by the Upper Cape Democratic Coalition and replaces our normal third Wednesday night meeting. For further information contact William Grant at 617 216 7985 or at williamfgrant@comcast.net.

Mark your calendars: Caucus to elect delegates to the Massachusetts Democratic Convention in Springfield on Sept. 19: will be held on June 13th, 10 am, at the Canty Center.

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Annual Membership Fiscal Year: April 1 to March 31, 2015

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Associate Member (\$15 a year)_____

Newsletter by U.S. Mail is \$10 extra a year _____

Total Donation: \$_____ Send check to FDTC, P.O. Box 312, Falmouth, MA 02541

Submitted by Kirstin Moritz, Newsletter Editor; photo by Matt Patrick