

CIVICS

Playing Ball at Truro Town Meeting

A sunny-then-moody field day with blue slips and blankets

BY [MICHAELA CHESIN](#) MAY 4, 2022

TRURO — As the crowd dwindled after the first day of town meeting on Saturday, two-year-old Harper Richter and five-year-old Mica Richter ran from inside Truro Central School to greet their parents on the school ballfield.

Their father, Raphael Richter, had spent the day speaking out on various hot-button issues. Mica reported that at the town-meeting child-care program he “played games with cars. I played in the vet office and I played with trains.”

During the first few hours outside on the field that day the mood was upbeat, as people spread blankets on the grass, moved their chairs out from under the tarp into the sunlight, and hugged their neighbors. With blue slips in hand, voters — some accompanied by friends, babies, or small dogs — sat in left and center field. Nonvoters sat in right field.

To someone from a bigger community, said first-time meeting-goer Chelsea Loughran, a new resident of Truro with two small children, town meeting “feels exciting.”



Julian (not Adrian) Cyr addresses Truro town meeting. (Photo by Nancy Bloom)

State Sen. Julian Cyr, who grew up in Truro, got Town Moderator Monica Kraft to crack a smile after she accidentally addressed him as “Adrian.” Cyr said, “Adrian Cyr is the beloved Cyr.”

The mood grew darker as the afternoon rolled on. Blankets were draped around shivering legs and dirt from the outfield started to blow in people’s faces.

“Time!” yelled out a group as Richter was speaking at the mic. “I have a timer; his time is not up,” Kraft responded. “Please stop,” Kraft asked. But the tactic of calling “Time!” continued until the end of the meeting.

Blue slips shot up and down for various votes, including the most contentious of the day, on Article 50, which would have changed the planning board from an elected to an appointed body. That discussion went on for about an hour, and a few people were clearly exasperated by it.

“I’m not sure what’s going to come out of my mouth,” resident Susan Howe said at the podium. “I’m discouraged by the town. There’s a lot of labeling that doesn’t need to happen.”

Article 50, because it was a charter change, needed a two-thirds majority to pass and did not get it. Richter called for a new vote, which led to further debate. Whether the motion to reconsider was a “travesty” or “only fair,” it passed with a majority. But the second vote on Article 50 again fell just shy of the needed two-thirds.

Resident Nancy Medoff said she enjoyed the entire process. It’s important to come prepared and stay to the bitter end, she said — that’s why she brought breakfast burritos and blankets.

“There can always be a revisit on an article, and it’s part of our duty as citizens to see all the issues brought forward,” said Medoff. “I love healthy debate, and seeing our small town come to life.”