

## **A Letter to our Grandchildren from the Planning Board**

*From the 1971 Annual Town Report*

The thing we have always in our minds is that there'll be alarmingly more of you than there are of us. Some of us were born here; most of us came here because it's beautiful and the air is fresh and we have green fields to walk in. We feel a terrible responsibility to see to it that as far as is humanly possible you will have a town like this to live in. So we've given most of our time and thought during the year to two matters, both specifically directed toward this end.

First, having polished up the specifications of the Open Space Residential Zone, we held neighborhood meetings to explain its provisions to the voters, who wisely adopted the new by-law at the Town Meeting. This is one reason why, although there are many more of you today, you can still walk out your front door and hear a meadow lark or see a Monarch butterfly. Another reason is that we changed the standards for Cluster developments, increasing the amount of land which must be left open and decreasing the allowable lot size. Only a little, but every little helps. And we encouraged developers to use the Cluster option, which is the reason why you find several sizeable fields where you are welcome to play.

And now we come to the second matter of deepest concern. The very steps that we have taken to make sure you would inherit a town still lovely and still healthy have made it so desirable that land prices, even in our day, have risen beyond what most people can pay. We are thinking about you, and your teachers, and the police force and the firemen and the men who take care of our roads, and we are thinking about ourselves as we grow older and want a smaller, less costly home. We are determined to create some housing that anyone who really wants to live in Lincoln can afford.

This involves difficult decisions. Such houses cannot be built without subsidies. Which programs should we use? Where should the houses be built? Concentrated or scattered throughout the Town? A State law threatened us with loss of the right to decide any of these questions for ourselves unless we acted quickly. Toward the end of the year the remaining sixty-seven acres of the Codman Place were purchased by the Lincoln Rural Land Foundation. A large part of this was to be turned over to the Lincoln Foundation for Moderate Income Housing. At last we had a start. How well we succeeded in solving our problem you will judge for yourselves, dear Grandchildren.

Small projects as well as large can [a]ffect the character of a town, and it was with this in mind that we regretfully decided that we must oppose the petition for a nursing home on Farrar Road. One of the stated purposes of the zoning by-law is "encouraging the most appropriate use of land within the Town." We felt that we would be betraying our trust to you in endorsing this project, since we considered the proposed building to be too large for the amount of land available and out of scale with its surroundings. The petition was withdrawn when the lot was found to be non-conforming, but we hope that long before you this, Mr. Seeckts will have found a more suitable place for his nursing home.

It will astonish you to learn that our winding country roads didn't always have paths adjacent to them for safe walking and bicycling. However, progress was made during the year. Excavation

for the utility lines speeded up construction on Bedford Road, so that by the year's end the most difficult and expensive section of the path was completed and the remainder roughed out as far as Route 2. The usual appropriation of funds at the Town Meeting would finish this section and made a good start on Trapelo Road.

And now, dear Grandchildren, what else? (I am mindful of the injunction not to bore you.) There are, of course, many routine matters which you, too, will have to deal with. We wonder whether you will have solved the problem of solid wastes? Maybe our best hope is that you will be wise enough to produce less of it.

We were sad to lose Jim Foust from the Board when he moved to Sudbury but overjoyed when Robert Brannen agreed to serve in his place until the next election. It is a fortunate little town that has such people available and willing to serve. May it still be so in your day.

We really needn't speak of this as it has been told you over and over by your parents and grandparents. We merely remind you that it's Elizabeth Snelling who makes all this possible.

*Robert C. Brannen*

*John R. Caswell*

*David M. Donaldson*

*James T. Foust*

*Richard C. Reece*

*Susan M. Brooks, Chairman*