

1607 Washington Plaza
Reston, Virginia 22070

September 1, 1967

Dear Fellow Resident of Reston:

As the first resident members of the Board of Trustees of the Reston Foundation, we are writing to you to promote our common understanding of the origin, purposes, present operation, and future status of the Foundation.

It is basic to the concept of a New Town -- a residential community with an economic base of its own, where people may work and live, enjoy their leisure time and take advantage of opportunities to learn -- that the facilities requisite for town life be an integral part of the community from the beginning. Thus, a New Town, unlike a conventional subdivision, must have shops and swimming pools, schools and club rooms, tennis courts and a library, a pharmacy and a recital hall, in addition to homes and employers, virtually from the inception of the development.

The developer who looks ahead, attempts to understand, and anticipates these needs before people settle into the community, can plan for and provide these basic facilities. But there are limits to what the developer can and should provide for the community. There is, first, the practical economic limitation on what the developer can donate to the community in the way of land, buildings, and support. Second, even when a thoughtful developer has made community facilities available, it is not his single responsibility to subsidize programs for those facilities, or to engender the creation of the organizations and institutions, from the Cub Scouts to a museum chapter, from concerts to the P. T. A., which will utilize and

program the facilities. Indeed, it is an important and third limitation on the developer that as people begin to reside in the community their interests and aspirations will help determine what facilities and programs should be made available in the growing community, and they will no doubt want to participate in the planning process that will bring those facilities and programs into being. But, finally, neither the developer nor the relatively small group of early inhabitants of a New Town can presume to decide for the 50 or 80 or 250 thousand people who will eventually constitute the city just what organizations, institutions, and community buildings will be wanted or needed 15 to 20 years; and ways must therefore be sought to protect the integrity of the comprehensive plan for the community, and the dynamics of the planning process.

When the New Town is not itself a complete and separate public or political jurisdiction (this will more likely be the case than not) the need to ensure appropriate community facilities and programs is made more difficult. The county or city government responsible in most instances for basic services and facilities, caught in the squeeze between increasing demands from an increasing population and an inadequate tax or revenue base, will be hard-pressed even to provide adequate schools, roads, sewage disposal and other necessities, much less the more sophisticated and expensive community needs for health, welfare, education, and recreation that contemporary standards of urban life require. The state and federal governments will, on the whole, quite naturally be concerned with raising the standards of those communities which for one reason or another cannot even provide minimum basic facilities and programs before they turn their attention to the higher standards approaching

the maximum opportunities for personal and community enrichment.

Faced with these dilemmas, the New Town -- its developer and subsequently its employers and residents -- must develop basic foundations for the growth of community facilities, institutions and programs in new and perhaps unconventional ways.

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The New Town of Reston, Virginia has established a framework for dealing with this problem. Reston's Deed of Dedication, a legal instrument worked out and filed with Fairfax County, protects the integrity of the master or comprehensive plan for Reston by providing protective covenants for land and water use which "run with the land." (The master plan itself is part of the Residential Planned Community zoning ordinance established by the County for the development of Reston, and other New Towns.) The Deed of Dedication also sets up homeowners' and cluster associations to administer the commonly-held land under the deed.

Of these two types of associations, the homeowners' has the more important role by reason of its community-wide activities. The cluster association, composed of townhouse owners, is responsible for the maintenance and operation of facilities and property to which it holds title, which is most likely to be common areas or parks within the cluster, roads, parking areas, walkways, playgrounds, and lighting fixtures. The homeowners' associations, on the other hand, as the natural custodians of property and buildings for community wide use, are responsible for the open spaces and facilities, in addition to such things as roads, streets and walkways, used in common by and for the benefit of all

Reston residents. Both associations collect annual dues from their members to pay the costs and taxes required to maintain the land and facilities in keeping with the covenants of the deed. The cluster associations, of which there are now five in Reston, will be small groups with perhaps 50 to 100 members. The homeowners' associations, Virginia non-stock corporations of which there are now two in Reston, will grow to be very large corporations with thousands of members consisting of all property owners in Reston, including those who belong to cluster associations. They are charged with the responsibility of enforcing the covenants of the deed. Lake Anne in Reston's first village has now been deeded to the homeowners' association, for example; and various swimming pools, tennis courts, and a ski run have been leased to them.

There is nothing to prevent the cluster or homeowners' associations from enhancing their community property by the addition of, say, playgrounds, sculpture or landscaping; indeed they are encouraged to do so. And, in time, the homeowners' associations particularly may decide to invest in additional community facilities, including the construction of buildings.

The availability of certain facilities early in the development of Reston has had a salutary impact on the community. The fact that there was a community hall in which to practice and perform was surely a factor in the decision of various residents to start a theater group and a choir; the existence of an art gallery served as a focal point for those interested in the visual arts to have shows, to form a chapter of the Virginia Museum; having a golf course made it natural to form a

golf association. These and other uses of the facilities which serve as expressions of community needs and desires help the developer to plan for additional facilities, and make the residents of the town active participants in the planning process.

But more is needed to sustain these early experimental beginnings of community organizations and institutions than the mere existence of the facilities. There is the need to maintain and operate them; there is the more important need in a fledgling community to have support for initiatives, programs, and performances. The homeowners' associations cannot afford at this time to staff the community hall. Nor can they, or any group of residents, afford to start a Children's Center for the supervised care of children, and the training of child care experts. Some additional structure or institution is needed in addition to the developer, the resident associations, and the county government if the seeds of meaningful community institutions and opportunities are to be planted in fertile soil, and especially if the larger social purposes implicit in the plan of the New Town of Reston for the creation of a truly civilized urban environment are to be realized.

That important institution has been organized to fill this gap, and meet these needs. It is the Reston Virginia Foundation for Community Programs, Inc.; this report is a record of its activities and experience to date.

Yours very sincerely,

T. Keith Glennan
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