

THE BEDFORD CITIZEN

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

JUNE 14, 2016

I have lived in this community with my family for the last twelve years. My husband and I consider ourselves very lucky to have been able to purchase a small condo that is half of a two-family house here in town, at a time when the prices were perhaps 50% of what they are now, at least based on my estimate. At the time, we knew we wanted to live somewhere with good schools and that Bedford was highly ranked. What we had no way of knowing at the time was that both of our children, who are of course the light of our lives and best children we could ask for, would have a variety of educational and developmental challenges that would result in our working with dozens of professionals in the Bedford schools, in every area from guidance to speech to occupational therapy. Year after year, I have felt blessed to have the help and support of these loving, knowledgeable professionals and have thanked my lucky stars that we bought our home here when we did. I am amazed every day by what takes place in these schools, from the Project Adventure program that has benefited my older son immensely, to the chicken raising, to the gardening, to the incredible annual musicals that are put on at Davis school.

However, I am always aware that in many other communities, most, even, this is not how things are. People have to push and fight for Special Education services, enrichment opportunities are nonexistent to minimal, and bullying goes unchecked. And I know that I can not say I am "blessed." I am LUCKY. Blessings are for everyone, they are not lavished only on those who are doing well in life. If I say that I am "blessed" to have what I have, does that mean that a poor family in a struggling school district was overlooked for blessing? The truth is I am lucky, and perhaps they were not. I was in the right place, on the right real estate website, at the right time. Now, in 2016, my family would not be able to purchase or even rent in Bedford, and I can't encourage friends who are unhappy in their communities or school districts to move here. It is simply too expensive. And we are two "working professionals".

Recently, on South Road, another smaller two-family home, much like my own, was torn down and is being rebuilt into a two-story behemoth. It is not yet listed

for sale but I can guess that each unit will cost way more than what it is replacing would have. So I was excited when I saw that further down on South Road, what appeared to be more reasonably sized foundations being laid for a community of homes that is now labeled as "The Cottages," and advertised as being "Green and Sustainable". Green and sustainable it may be, however, I was shocked when I looked up the development on-line out of curiosity and discovered that a two bedroom home is going to be listed for about 750K. For a "cottage." So much for more modest housing for middle-class or working class people, which I was so excited to think I was finally seeing in this town. Not that I am looking to move - we love our condo and our neighborhood, and our community garden. But I struggle as I watch this town become more and more upscale and less and less accessible to middle- or lower- income people and families. According to dictionary.com, a cottage is "a small, modest house." I struggle to see the modesty in a 750K home. It is my hope that we as a community can begin to examine where we are going as a town and perhaps start to question what kinds of development we really want and need in this beautiful place, where we are so LUCKY to live.

Kate Reynolds