

On Buying Time

Editorial from:
THE VINEYARD GAZETTE
Friday, October 12, 1984

It can seldom, if ever, be popular, but the only wise approach to the pressures of growth is adoption of the method chosen in Orleans on Cape Cod and still under consideration on the Vineyard—a moratorium to buy time, and also to buy the necessary benefits of foresight. Unavoidable otherwise, is the necessity of trying to divide up something that there isn't enough of.

There isn't enough land in appropriate places, there isn't enough water that can be relied upon as a pure and adequate public supply, and there isn't enough of the quality on which the prosperity of Martha's Vineyard is based to permit the accommodation of growth without consideration of the far years ahead.

Somebody wants this, somebody wants that, but a good many of these are inevitably going to come out short, and the overall plan of growth, arrived at hastily and piecemeal, is likely to turn out in false proportion or even as a monstrosity.

Growth has to do with all the elements of an impulsive and unpredictable humanity. It begins at that still unsolved first step in any vision of the future, transportation of people, automobiles and supplies from the mainland. How many people, as individuals, are going to be able to reach the Island at will, and how long can they be accommodated in all the ways necessary for their satisfaction? Here we are at the old

question of roads again—crowding, traffic coming and going. The public water supplies must be established as permanent, and how is growth to be related to them?

Over on the Cape a member of the Orleans planning board said, "we just need some breathing room." More than that, really, though in Orleans the issue relates to the town's commercial growth, we need most of all a sense of the entirety, of the future character and reality that a town should have. The case is one of bringing a heritage properly down to the present moment without distortion or disaster.

There is also the challenge of time measured off in years and seasons without end: When is the pressure of growth likely to level off, or must it be stopped by an excess which will remove the Island's present attractiveness?

Village Advertiser Commentary:

Henry Beetle Hough continues to editorialize for the Vineyard Gazette although members of the Reston family now top the paper's masthead as publishers. Mr. Hough, once again, reaches out a protective hand to shelter Cape Cod and his own beloved island hoping to ward off blows of growth, bruises that may not yet have turned black-and-blue, but must, under repeated assault. Let us heed the wisdom of his