



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Town receives bequest to fund sidewalks

Former Councilmember Maud Robinson, who passed away last year just shy of her 97<sup>th</sup> birthday, left the bulk of her estate to the Town of Vienna for the specific purpose of building sidewalks, over a five-year period, in areas where they aren't already planned or likely to be funded through grants or new construction.

The majority of Robinson's estate, which has not yet been settled but will total more than \$7 million, will endow the Maud Ferris Robinson Charitable Trust, which will fund the sidewalk projects.

"She gave the bulk of her estate to the Town," says Laurie Genevro Cole, executor of the estate and trustee of the trust, "because she and [husband and former mayor] Charlie were absolutely devoted to the Town of Vienna. They spent so much of their time and talents in making Vienna a well-governed community where people would want to live. They lived very simply, and they had no children. Vienna is their legacy.

"One thing that she and Charlie [who served as Vienna's mayor from 1976 until his death in 2000] did through his campaigns and otherwise was to walk Vienna," Cole adds. "They probably walked every single street multiple times. They realized how much sidewalks mean to making a place a community and a good place to live."

The Town of Vienna is identifying streets, where curb and gutter already exists, on which sidewalks may be installed. Before Town Council makes a decision as to which projects to move forward with, residents on selected streets will be contacted by the Town and given an opportunity to provide feedback. The first streets to potentially have sidewalk added will be considered by Town Council at its January 27 meeting.

The Town of Vienna currently has roughly 85 miles of sidewalk. The Robinson bequest is expected to provide up to 3.3 miles in additional sidewalks throughout Town. Public Works Director Michael Gallagher notes that it could take up to two years from identification of a street to walking on sidewalks. The Town will use contractors for this work.

“This is a wonderful gift to the Town of Vienna,” says Mayor Laurie DiRocco. “These sidewalks – and others – help connect places, but, more importantly, they connect the community. Maud and Charlie were all in for the Town of Vienna. We’re grateful that this is how Maud, out of her deep sense of public service and commitment to the Town, chose to pass on her legacy to the Vienna community.”

In addition to the trust established to fund sidewalks, Robinson left \$50,000 to the Town for beautification purposes. Cole says that these funds will be used to plant trees and other similar projects.

Charlie and Maud Robinson married in 1947 and moved to Vienna in 1951. Charlie Robinson, who was an attorney with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, served as the Town of Vienna’s mayor for 24 years before his death on January 3, 2000. Maud Robinson served on numerous community and Town boards and commissions. She was on Town Council from 2000-2009. She died on March 11 last year.

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