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Public comments

From: Anne Morgan
Sent: Friday, May 12, 2023 2:12 PM
To: Planning
Subject: Donation of Schneider Property to rare

Official Plan Amendment Application 01/23
Schneider/rare Charitable Research Reserve
567 and 585 Wilmot Line and 1236 Carmel-Koch Road

TO WILMOT TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

We are writing in support of the application for an amendment to the Township Official Plan and an application for changes to the Township Zoning By-Law.

We wholeheartedly support the donation of portions of 3 existing agricultural Zoned Schneider properties to rare Charitable Research Reserve. These lands lying on the Waterloo Moraine are a critically important groundwater recharge area, especially since we have lost so much recharge area by building on the west side of Waterloo.

There are over 70 rare, endangered and regionally significant species found in the Laurel Creek headwaters of the Environmentally Significant Landscape (ESL) and this alone makes this area worth preserving.

These aforementioned portions of the Schneider Property need to be preserved in perpetuity and rare is ideally suited to do this. Not only will rare Charitable Research preserve protect the land and the groundwater, but they will help to continue the educational function of the land. So many people, and children in particular, will benefit from the exposure to Nature which is rapidly disappearing with expanding development.

The Schneider property under the care and protection of rare Charitable Research Preserve is a valuable asset to Wilmot Township as well as the broader community. Please vote to preserve it.

Sincerely,
Anne Morgan Ph.D
Alan's Morgan Ph.D

15 May 2023

Re. Official Plan Amendment Application 01/23

We have lived at the above address since 1979 and are profoundly interested in the outcome of this application and the implementation of any new management initiatives.

First: We want to thank the Schneider family for their generosity in making this huge donation and the *rare Charitable Research Reserve* for assuming responsibility for ongoing protection and management. The proximity of these lands to Waterloo vastly increases their conservation and recreational value and potential.

There are a number of issues we'd like to see thoroughly discussed:

- **Accessibility to hikers and skiers and their management.** The never-ending abundance of road-side litter (which *we* have been collecting for more than 40 years) and roadside dumps of garbage, and garden/construction leftovers, etc., indicate that there are *many* people who have no hesitation to dump their trash on other people's property ... for *rare*, trash is going to be a never-ending issue. How often and how thoroughly will this be done? How will *rare* ensure that hikers and skiers remain on the designated trails? How will *rare* enforce a no-foraging policy? (We have interrupted such harvesting activities dozens of times over the years.)
- **Tree removal.** Ideally *rare* should enforce a plan of *no* tree removal except for trees that are deemed unacceptably hazardous due to their proximity to trails. In the past, aggressive tree removal, particularly of cavity-filled old-growth and dead trees, has almost certainly contributed to the local extinction of species such as the Northern Flying Squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*).
- **Invasive-weed management.** All these properties, both woodland and grassland, are subject to invasion by non-native species such as Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) ... a huge threat to native plants. This should receive on-going aggressive attention by *rare*.
- **Field Restoration.** With a *lot* of work, existing fields, which used to be cultivated for corn and later hay, could be restored to a much more natural grassland. Decades ago this property was breeding ground for endangered species such as the Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*).
- **Mosquito Control.** Much of the donated lands contain seasonally flooded wetlands, including areas within forest habitat as well as habitats abutting roadways. These wetlands generate a *lot* of mosquitoes but, of course, also serve as valuable habitat for many invertebrate and vertebrate species. *rare* should forbid any attempts to reduce the mosquito population, whether by use of pesticides or by drainage. The local forest mosquitoes (mainly *Aedes provocans* and *Ae. stimulans*) are *not* a vector threat to people or the local wildlife. The main mosquito-vector problem in KW derives from mosquito breeding in urban sewers and catch basins as well as from domestic rain barrels.
- **Research possibilities.** These Schneider-donated properties offer a *lot* of potential for research. SMS was a professor in Biology at the University of Waterloo; I carried out a lot of research on these properties, on both Culicidae (mosquitoes) and Tabanidae (horse- and deerflies). *rare* should encourage research activities on the lands, research on both animals and plants.
- **Parking.** We feel it very important that any future parking plans should not impact the lives of the Schneider neighbors. For the past 40 years, we have seen heavy use of the Schneider properties, for hiking and, particularly, cross-country skiing. The existing roadside parking on Carmel Koch Rd, particularly with the newer "no-parking" signage on one side, has served these users very well. Any road widening, for example, would certainly threaten wetland habitats. Because most users seem to enter from Wideman Road, the expansion of parking opportunities on Wideman Road should be considered.

1. smith_sm@mac.com

From: David Gascoigne
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 11:39 AM
To: Planning
Subject: Schneider Lands Donation

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to lend my full support to, and to express my deep appreciation of, the proposed donation of land by the esteemed Schneider family, renowned for their environmental ethic and social conscience, to the rare Charitable Research Foundation.

I can think of no better organization to ensure that the lands will be preserved in perpetuity for the enjoyment of nature, the furtherance of science and to serve as an enduring tribute to the Schneider family.

I urge Wilmot Council to take all steps required to facilitate this transfer in a timely manner.

Respectfully,

David M. Gascoigne (Two-time past President of Waterloo Region Nature)

Waterloo, ON

www.travelswithbirds.blogspot.com

Ecology is the science of communities, and the ecological conscience is therefore the ethics of community life. Aldo Leopold

[REDACTED],
Kitchener, [REDACTED]
15 May, 2023

Mayor Salonen
Wilmot Township

Dear Mayor Salonen and councillors of Wilmot Township

For many Years I have had the pleasure of being able to ski in the winter and hike in the other seasons on the Schneider property in Wilmot Township. This property is an environmental gem and as the population of Waterloo Region increases it has the chance to be a treasured natural space that will be valued by the citizens in the same way that High Park in the city of Toronto is appreciated by the population of that city. I hope you know that the creation of High Park was made possible by John Howard who gave 120 Acres to Toronto in 1873 and the park was officially opened in 1876. When Howard died in 1890 another 40 acres along with Colborne Lodge was also given to the city.

I have heard that something similar could happen in Waterloo Region. Jane Schneider is offering to donate a large portion of her property to RARE Charitable Reserve to be preserved as natural space in perpetuity. This is indeed an extremely generous gift and I hope that you and your council will accept this incredible chance to have such a wonderful natural space offered to both the citizens of Wilmot and also Waterloo Region.

Please share this letter of support with all your councillors and your planning department

Yours Truly

Gordon Nicholls

From: Graham Macdonald
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 12:34 PM
To: Planning
Cc: Stephanie Sobek-Swant
Subject: Severance of Schneider lands, Wilmot Township

Dear Sir/Madam

We enthusiastically support the severance application of the Schneider family to sever a portion of the Schneider lands as the first step in donating the severed lands to rare Charitable Research Reserve Land Trust for preservation in perpetuity. These lands are of high conservation value and are also of great value to the community at large as a recreational natural area. We highly recommend that Wilmot Planning Department and Council approve the severance.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Macdonald and Margaret Lewis

Waterloo, ON

May 16, 2023

Re: Official Plan Amendment Application 01/23
Zone Change Application 01/23
Schneider / rare Charitable Research Reserve
567 & 585 Wilmot Line & 1236 Carmel-Koch Road

We are writing to indicate our whole-hearted support for the above Plan Amendment and Zoning Change Application.
We have some comments about parking in the area.

For well over 30 years, our family has resided at [REDACTED] Wilmot Line, the southwest corner of the Wilmot Line and Carmel-Koch Rd intersection, and we neighbour the land featured in the Zone Change Application.

Future conservation of the land referred to in the application as the “severed land” will continue to support the diversity of plants and animals that are found in this ecologically significant landscape today. The Schneider family has provided stewardship of these woods, fields and wetlands for many, many years and during this time they have also very generously provided trail access and trail maintenance for public use on their land.

Access to these trails for the purpose of hiking, cross-country skiing and bird-watching has been a tremendous asset to the wider community, be it for a family hike to appreciate the fall colours on a fall weekend, or for friends to meet at a trailhead for a winter’s ski, or perhaps for a solitary, contemplative walk in the woods during a time of personal grief and loss. Our time spent in nature provides for physical and mental well-being.

We fully support the zone change application which proposes to re-zone the severed lands to Zone 11 (Open Space) restricting uses to conservation.

Our comments about parking are chiefly in support of the status quo.

There are several points of access to the trails along the Carmel-Koch Rd and one access point at Wilmot Line at its junction with Wideman Rd. Parking for trail access has traditionally been on the side of the road.

In recent years, parking signage has significantly improved. Current parking signage has addressed problematic sight-lines that exist along the road.

The busiest times for parking access along Carmel-Koch Rd and Wideman may occur on a weekend in winter when there happens to be enough snow for the trails to be skied AND the weather proves neither too warm nor too cold for the majority of skiers.

We are regular users of these roads and observe that cars parked along the side of the road have a traffic-calming effect. This effect is more pronounced when parking occurs on both sides of the road as it does on occasion. Slowed vehicle speed lessens hazards for pedestrians or skiers crossing the road. Risks are minimized, although not eliminated, with slowed motorist speed.

With respect to winter road snow clearance, the Carmel-Koch Rd serves as a school bus route and the snow ploughing occurs early in the morning prior to the school bus arrival. Roadside parking is minimal in the early morning as there is no permitted trail use between dusk and dawn.

We would support the ongoing legal parking that is currently permitted.

We do not believe that a parking lot would be desired nor feasible.

Our community has been fortunate for the Schneider family stewardship of these lands, the presence of a natural heritage network of woods and wetlands and the well-loved trails they contain. We should now support the future conservation of these lands by rare Charitable Research Reserve. Our future community will benefit from what we conserve today.

respectfully submitted,

Dianne Ensing and Norman Bodkin

From: Fraser
Sent: Tuesday, May 16, 2023 2:33 PM
To: Planning
Subject: Schneider Property Severance

[REDACTED]
Kitchener, [REDACTED]
16 May, 2023

Mayor Salonen,

I have recently learned that the Schneider family has decided to donate a significant acreage of their rural property to rare Charitable Research Reserve, our local and trusted land trust.
The Schneiders have openly shared their property with the general public for decades. I first visited their property in the mid seventies and have returned in all seasons in the near fifty years since.
Research has shown that spending time in natural habitats is beneficial mentally, emotionally, physically, and socially. I strongly support the proposed severance application. This large natural area will be of immense benefit to ALL future generations in Wilmot and neighbouring communities. Please take the necessary steps to make this very significant gift, a perpetual natural gem that will be enjoyed by many.
Please share my letter of encouragement with all councillors and all staff working on this proposal.

Respectfully,
Fraser Gibson

[REDACTED]
Woodstock, ON
[REDACTED]

May 16, 2023

Township of Wilmot
Development Services Department
60 Snyder's Road West
Baden, ON
N3A 1A1

Re: Official Plan Amendment Application 01/23
Zone Change Application 01/23
Schneider / rare Charitable Research Reserve
567 & 585 Wilmot Line & 1236 Carmel-Koch Road

Dear Mr. Martin,

I have known the Schneider family for decades. As a friend, I was fortunate to have access to their properties. I know these lands extremely well, especially their biology. I was instrumental in having their lands designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Policy Area.

It is exciting to learn of the family's initiative to have a good portion of their property firmly protected as Open Space stewarded by rare Charitable Research Reserve land trust as part of the Federal Ecological Ecogifts strategy,

I unhesitatingly support this effort. I hope a safe parking strategy can be formulated compatible with maintaining the natural integrity of the site. Use of the property will certainly escalate.

Sincerely,

Lawrence E. Lamb

Cc: Stephanie Sobek-Swant
rare Charitable Research Reserve

From: Janet Ozaruk
Sent: Tuesday, May 16, 2023 11:49 AM
To: Planning
Subject: In support of the Schneider Lands donation

Good morning - I fully support the donation of a severed portion from the Schneider Lands to *rare* for conservation purposes.

A natural area of this size with such great ecological importance and passive recreational opportunities, so close to an urban centre, needs to be firmly protected from development.

Regards, Janet Ozaruk

From: dwendland
Sent: Tuesday, May 16, 2023 5:08 PM
To: Planning
Subject: Regarding donation of Schneider lands in Wilmot to "rare".

This is short note to lend my support to this move as a community member who has walked, skied those lands for years. It is a special action on the part of the Schneider who have opened their lands to the public and this action could allow community use for years as others eye the land for development. Please do everything in your power to assist this donation.

Sincerely
Dennis Wendland
Waterloo Region Resident for over 50 years.

From: David Westfall
Sent: Tuesday, May 16, 2023 12:03 AM
To: Planning
Cc: Stephanie Sobek-Swant
Subject: Proposed Schneider Family Donation to rare Charitable Research Reserve and Requested Severance

To the Planning Division, Township of Wilmot -

I am writing in full support of the requested severance by the Schneider Family that is in connection with their proposed donation of 230 acres to **rare** Charitable Research Reserve.

I urge you ... and our Wilmot Township Council ... to do everything in your power to facilitate and ensure this magnificent gift, which will preserve in perpetuity one of Wilmot's foremost ecological jewels.

These 230 acres, when severed and with zoning amended to "Open Space" ... and with the further protections provided through the framework of the federal Ecological Gifts Program ... will significantly anchor and fortify Wilmot Line as the "hard boundary" between the Township of Wilmot and the City of Waterloo ... strengthening the clear demarcation between rural and urban.

Respectfully,

~ Dave

David J Westfall
[REDACTED] Notre Dame Drive
St Agatha, Ontario, N0B 2L0

Waterloo Region Nature
Suite #353
5-420 Erb Street West
Waterloo ON N2L 6K6

May 16, 2023

Mayor Natasha Salonen and Council
Wilmot Township
60 Snyder's Road West
Baden
ON N3A 1A1



Re: Official Plan Amendment Application 01/23 Zone Change Application 01/23 Schneider / rare Charitable Research Reserve 567 & 585 Wilmot Line & 1236 Carmel-Koch Road

Dear Mayor Salonen and Council,

We are a naturalist club for all parts of the Region of Waterloo, and we are a charity engaged in conservation activities. Our nearly 350 members sponsor and take part in indoor and outdoor activities about any aspect of nature. We cater to nature lovers of all ages with activities and outings for adults, youth, and children.

We are delighted with the news that the Schneider family is donating lands in Wilmot Township to the **rare Charitable Research Reserve**. Our members have enjoyed planned outings to hike, snowshoe, or cross-country ski on both the Schneider lands and the **rare** trails over many years. As with other members of Wilmot Township and the Region as a whole, we have greatly valued the generosity of the Schneiders in allowing the community to enjoy a large and varied natural area. We know under the demonstrated conservation stewardship of **rare**, this incredible greenspace and all the wild species and spaces, therein will remain protected and continue to offer nature-based learning, stewardship, and recreational opportunities.

We support the Schneiders and **rare** in their plans to not pave any of the conservation lands, including for parking. We urge council to explore alternative safe parking options and we trust that the parking issue will not become an impediment to the Official Plan Amendment that is integral to the land donation.

We strongly urge Wilmot Township to approve the Official plan amendment application, and in doing so ensure this valuable greenspace and habitat in our community remains intact and protected.

Sincerely

Jenna Quinn
President, Waterloo Region Nature

Cc: City of Waterloo- Mayor Dorothy McCabe and Council, **rare**- Stephanie Sobek-Swant,
Grand River Environmental Network- Kevin Thomason, Jane Schneider

From: Wayne and Lynda Buck
Sent: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 8:43 AM
To: Planning
Subject: The Schneider property

The Schneider family are longtime residents of Wilmot Township and have generously allowed the general public access to walk the trails on their property in spring and summer and snowshoe and ski in the winter months without fees. The family is donating the land to the *rare* Charitable Research Reserve, a local land trust and environmental institute that already owns or holds under easement over 1200 acres of conservation land in Waterloo Region and Wellington County. It is rare's goal to protect these lands intact in their natural state, forever.

This first step is required by the Township and will result in an Official Plan amendment and change the zoning for the properties to be severed from Agricultural to Open Space. This is an important step that will ensure additional protection from development pressures. Land that is zoned Open Space is not permitted to have any dwellings built in the future, whereas land that is zoned Agricultural allows for a dwelling to be constructed.

I urge the planning department to support this amendment and to recommend that council support it as well.

Wayne Buck

We don't understand the meaning of life until we plant a tree, under the shade of which we know we will never sit.
Nelson Henderson

From: NVEcoboosters
Sent: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 10:22 PM
To: Planning
Subject: Schneider Conservation Lands

To Whom It May Concern,

The Nith Valley EcoBoosters wholeheartedly supports the donation of Schneider Family property for conservation purposes and its ongoing management by rare Charitable Research Reserve. The land being considered for the donation has been shared by the owners for the enjoyment of community members for decades. The extensive trail network has been used for hiking, cross country skiing and bird watching. The land is important ecologically as it is the home of many plant and animal species. In addition, as part of the Laurel Creek Headwaters, this property has been designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Landscape.

Some members of the Nith Valley EcoBoosters along with local councillors were invited to join a guided hike through the Schneider property in November 2018. Those of us who participated have first hand knowledge of the important ecological and environmental significance of these lands, not to mention the memories of experiencing the natural beauty of the area.

The Nith Valley EcoBoosters' mission statement indicates our commitment to achieving and supporting a long-term healthy environment in our community. Advocating for the protection of natural spaces is key to reaching that goal. A healthy environment is necessary for the well-being of all life on our planet. For these reasons we are absolutely in favour of this donation of land.

It is our understanding that the first step in the process of donating these lands for perpetual conservation is that they be severed from other Schneider properties. This requires that the Township agrees to a zoning change from Agricultural to Open Space for the land in question.

The Nith Valley EcoBoosters strongly recommends that the Township supports this zone change.

Our group is delighted with the prospect of this land becoming part of the rare Charitable Research Reserve and we look forward to the completion of this process.

Dorothy Wilson
Communications Team
Nith Valley EcoBoosters.

From: Ross Dickson
Sent: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 2:12 PM
To: Planning
Subject: Schneider land development changes

I am writing today to support a proposed land development change to allow severance of land parcels currently located within the Schneider woodlot located on Carmel Koch Road. My support is based on environmental protection measures that are proposed for the future.

The Schneider family has generously allowed the public to access a trail network during the summer for hiking and birdwatching and photography, and during the winter season for skiing if snow depths permit. In general the public has been respectful of the informal rules, and with improved signage the woodlot should be preserved for generations. rare Charitable Research Reserve has a commendable record of landscape preservation.

But my main support is not because of the exercise and mental health benefits for humans. It's because woodlots of this diverse collection of habitats used by birds, amphibians, mammals and insects are becoming rare anywhere in southern Ontario. A checklist of plants and fungi here rivals anything on offer anywhere in Waterloo Region.

In a typical year, I hike a portion of the trails about once per three weeks from May through October. It is one of my favourite places in the Region. I say it needs protection from development pressures to preserve an irreplaceable segment of the natural world. Its boundaries contain some of the drainage of precious drinking water; why would we as a society risk damage to such a valuable resource?

Ross Dickson
Kitchener, Ontario

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Ross Dickson

From: Bruce Graham
Sent: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 9:42 PM
To: Planning
Subject: Schneider Property Wilmot

Hello. I am writing in support of the donation of the Schneider Property, Wilmot to the Rare Charitable Research Reserve.

I am the President and long term volunteer of the Avon Trail. This footpath is 130 Km long and runs between St Marys and Conestogo. Due to the generosity of the Schneider family the Avon Trail has crossed their land for decades. This has allowed walkers of all ages and abilities to exercise while enjoying this magnificent Schneider property.

Through the grapevine I have heard that there is some concern about parking. I have been visiting this property since 2015. Other than the Covid period of April through August 2020, I have never seen heavy parking. In general I note that visitors, hikers or skiers, stay for brief periods. After one or two hours they leave. Shoulder parking on Carmel Koch is never an issue, nor is parking on Wideman Road. I have never seen cars parked on Wilmot Line.

This new act of generosity by the Schneider family and particularly Jane Schneider should be applauded. Wilmot should allow the land donation to proceed without delay so that the public may continue to enjoy it in perpetuity.

Regards

Bruce Graham
Avon Trail
President

From: Taunton Kk
Sent: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 10:23 PM
To: Planning
Subject: Schneider Conservation

Dear Wilmot Township,

Our township is in great need of protecting its natural spaces and providing a place for community trails. We need to respect and cherish the biodiversity we have. This will be one step to help fight climate change.

Please allow Rare to lead the Schneider Conservation project. Their integrity and professionalism is proven and they are capable of making this project a success in all the right ways.

Thank you,

K Kokkelink of New Dundee.

- Karen Kokkelink

From: Wilmot Horticulture
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2023 3:59 PM
To: Planning
Cc: Stephanie.Sobek-Swant
Subject: Schneider lands donation

To whom it may concern,

The Wilmot Horticultural Society has learned that the Schneider family is planning to donate a significant portion of their Wilmot Township property to *rare* Charitable Research Reserve for conservation purposes.

Since the first part of the donation, severance and rezoning of the land, is being presented to Wilmot Council on May 29, the Society would like to formally express its full support for this exciting proposal. The Township of Wilmot is fortunate to be location of such a significant act of generosity.

The Schneider family has been freely sharing their trails with the community for years, giving members of the public the opportunity to hike, ski, watch birds and generally appreciate the natural environment with the only expectation being respect.

With a rapidly growing community and extreme pressure to develop land for housing, it is imperative for steps to be taken now to preserve and protect natural areas whenever possible. This is a unique opportunity that is indeed "rare".

Wilmot Horticultural Society, including its project Let's Tree Wilmot, is fully supportive of the Schneider family's timely donation to *rare*. We are excited about the future prospects for this land.

We hope that Wilmot Township will do everything in its power to allow the proposal to flow smoothly and quickly, including taking the first step of rezoning to Open Space.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yvonne Zyma
for the Board of Directors,
Wilmot Horticultural Society

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Yvonne Zyma
Secretary

"Bringing people and gardening together since 1968"