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**Sent:** Sunday, January 21, 2024 8:14 PM

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**Subject:** Schneider Family Land Donation to rare

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Dear Mayor Salonen and members of Wilmot Council

I am writing today to express my concern and extreme disappointment in hearing that the 235 acre Schneider Family donation to rare Charitable Research Reserve has not been completed and may actually be in jeopardy. The Schneider Family's unconventional willingness to allow strangers access to their property, year round, has been exceptionally well received by respectful users. The property is loved by many who seek a quiet natural place for passive recreation or for their mental and emotional well being. These 235 acres of wetland, forest and open fields encompass an environmental gem that provides ecological benefits to even those who may never visit the site. We are in desperate need of more of these wonderful natural places.

Even though the donation to rare requires an amendment to the Township's zoning bylaw from agricultural to conservation lands, the overall use of the property will not change. This zoning change should not be a lengthy process nor should the required severances. Requiring a parking lot be built as a condition of the severances and zoning amendment seems to single out a new owner. If a parking lot was not required in the past, why is one required now? I am sure you are well aware that visitors access the Schneider property and other nearby properties on Carmel Koch from at least 4 major locations. A parking lot, regardless of its location will not remove the need for roadside parking. Even if a parking lot were to be built, there would still be areas of roadside parking. As a result, if the Township is concerned about parking, it should concentrate its efforts to ensuring that existing roadside parking is as safe as possible. The shoulders in most of the current parking areas seem to have served their purpose extremely well over the many years of their use. At many times of the year there may be no cars present. It is only during the cross-country ski season that numerous spaces are occupied, and the ski season is becoming shorter and shorter.

I urge you to move this proposal forward as quickly as possible without requiring the establishment of a parking lot that may have numerous detrimental effects on the environmental integrity of the property and bring with it some of the undesirable outcomes of a secluded parking area.

Ultimately, approving this very significant land donation may be one of the most consequential decisions of your entire tenure on Council. This is a once in a lifetime decision that will affect not only this generation, but all future generations of local citizens-your grandchildren and hopefully mine! If this property is not protected now, it never will be. Fifty years from now it could be Wilmot's "Island of Green Hills" or it could be a housing subdivision. Your time to make this irreversible decision is running out.

Your decision should be focused on preserving the natural integrity of this outstanding contribution to a local land trust, not about a parking lot that will not solve a perceived problem.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]