

2024-02-20

Attention: Wilmot Legislative Services, Office of the Clerk
Re: Schneider rare Land Donation - Correspondence to Council Agenda Package

Attached with this correspondence is a CTV News Kitchener report by Jeff Pickel, dated February 16th, 2024. I would like to highlight a few key points, including:

- The Township (Wilmot) said they, along with the City of Waterloo, are working with the Schneiders and Rare to find a solution (stated in several Council Meetings).
- The City of Waterloo, however, has a different outlook on the situation (“...*we do not believe that an additional formal parking lot is required*”).

In the February 16th CTV Kitchener report, Ward 2 Councillor Royce Bodaly is interviewed, commenting:

- A parking lot is (*not*) necessary to facilitate the land donation approval.
- Appreciates concern, also recognizes a “*huge loss*” if the donation not completed.

Waterloo Councillor Bodaly’s February 16th comments would appear to reinforce comments earlier provided to Wilmot Staff/Council, in which the following conclusion was provided:

“In closing the City of Waterloo supports the land donation and recognizes the difficulty of adding a parking facility in these environmentally sensitive lands.”

Based on the recent comments of both the City of Waterloo, and one of its Councillors, Wilmot’s Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) should comment publicly in Council Chambers at the February 26th Council meeting, with confirmation of the following:

- When a Development Services report will be brought forth to Council, *and*
- That the report be accompanied by a (recorded) vote.

If the above is not provided to Council/Citizens in the February 26th meeting, Council should mandate staff to an immediate date set by Council.

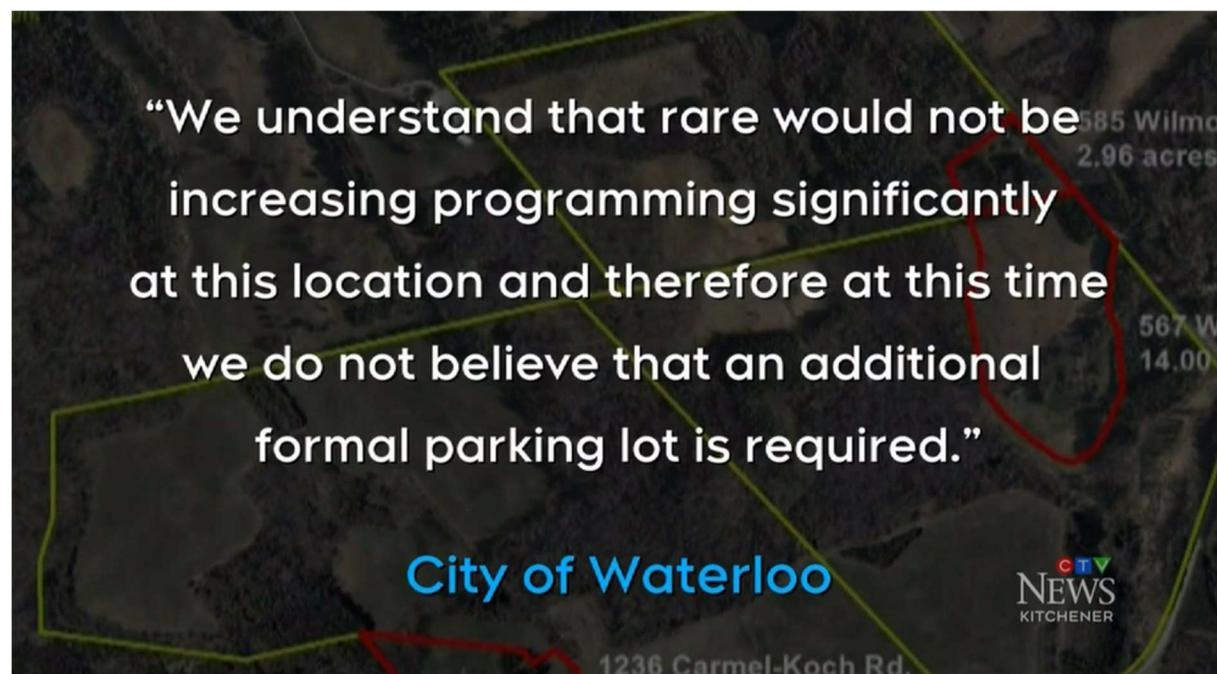
Ms. Schneider is well into her 90’s. It is incumbent upon all of us to see this donation moves forward in her lifetime. It would be a shame if decades of community and environmental stewardship are halted due to a lack of commitment by this Council to provide both this family, and the greater community, with a positive outcome.

Rory Farnan



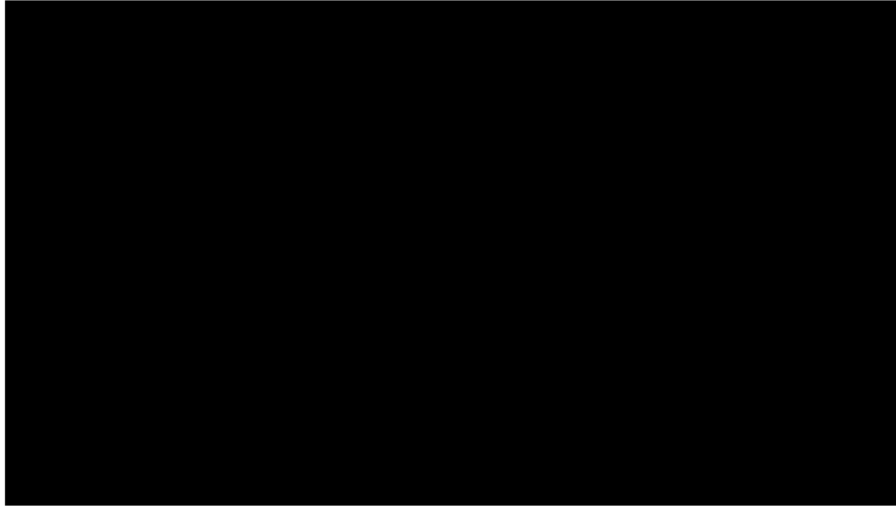
Attachment included: **CTV News Kitchener:** Wait continues for the Schneider family's Wilmot land donation - https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/wait-continues-for-the-schneider-family-s-wilmot-land-donation-1.6773063?_vfz=medium%3Dsharebar - Jeff Pickle - CTV News Kitchener Videographer - Published February 16th, 2024, 9:24 p.m. EST

Screenshot: City of Waterloo quote - **CTV News Kitchener:** Wait continues for the Schneider family's Wilmot land donation - https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/wait-continues-for-the-schneider-family-s-wilmot-land-donation-1.6773063?_vfz=medium%3Dsharebar - Jeff Pickle - CTV News Kitchener Videographer - Published February 16th, 2024, 9:24 p.m. EST



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Wait continues for the Schneider family's Wilmot land donation



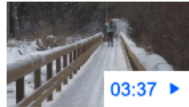
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03:37 ▶

Jeff Pickel
CTV News Kitchener Videographer
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Published Feb. 16, 2024 9:24 p.m. EST

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The wait continues for the Schneider family as they attempt to donate a large parcel of land to the Rare Charitable Reserves.

Since 2020, the Schneiders have been trying to donate over 230 acres of land in Wilmot Township.

The deal hit a snag when the township decided in order for the donation to go through, the property would need a parking lot and it would need to be paid for by Rare or the Schneiders.

The family indicated the donation would have to happen while 94 year-old Jane Schneider is still living.

MORE: Schneider family land donation hits bureaucratic road block in Wilmot Township

The township said they, along with the City of Waterloo, are working with the Schneiders and Rare to find a solution.

The City of Waterloo, however, has a different outlook on the situation as they do not believe a parking lot is required.

"We understand that Rare would not be increasing programming significantly at this location and therefore, at this time, we do not believe that an additional formal parking lot is required," the city said in a statement.

Stephanie Sobek-Swant, executive director of the rare Charitable Research Reserve, skiing on the Schneider lands. (Jeff Pickel/CTV Kitchener)

Royce Bodaly is the Ward 2 Councillor in Waterloo and it borders the Schneider property.

He said the City of Waterloo is minor player in this dispute.

"With respect to the to the land donation, the city does not really have a role to play when it comes to the land donation."

According to Bodaly, the city believes any parking issues can be mitigated without building a new parking area.

"While we don't agree that a parking lot itself is necessary to facilitate the land donation, we do respect and appreciate that there are concerns with respect to pedestrians and the safety of the Wilmot line and people accessing the land," he said.





Map from the rare Charitable Research Reserve.

Bodaly is hopeful a deal can be reached soon.

"It would be a huge loss, not just for residents today, but for residents well into the future."

Rare Charitable Reserves and the Schneider family have both been vocal about the urgency to get the deal done quickly.

So far there are no planned council meetings to discuss the issue.

No one from Wilmot Township was made available to speak with CTV News on this story.

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The Schneider property that is current open for public use, (Jeff Pickel/CTV Kitchener)

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