

From: dan brennan <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:30 AM
To: Natasha Salonen <natasha.salonen@wilmot.ca>; Steven Martin <steven.martin@wilmot.ca>; Stewart Cressman <stewart.cressman@wilmot.ca>; Lillianne Dunstall <lillianne.dunstall@wilmot.ca>; Harvir Sidhu <harvir.sidhu@wilmot.ca>; Kris Wilkinson <kris.wilkinson@wilmot.ca>; Clerks <clerks@wilmot.ca>
Subject: Schneider Woods (Appl. #OPAA-01-23)

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Dear Mayor Salonen and Wilmot Councillors:

I am writing to urge you and your fellow members of Wilmot Township Council to approve without further delay the planning and severance applications (OPAA-01-23 and ZCA 01-23) that the rare Charitable Research Reserve and the Schneider family submitted to you in March 2023, so that the family's planned donation of over 230 acres of pristine natural lands can proceed.

According to media reports, the primary obstacle to these approvals and this donation is the township planning staff's proposed requirement that a parking lot be built on or near these lands. This requirement is ill advised and unnecessary, for several reasons.

- When the donation proceeds, these lands will continue to be used in the same way that they have for decades. lack of a parking lot has not created any serious problems before, so there is no need to build one now.
- These lands are among the most ecologically significant in Waterloo Region, and part of the Laurel Creek Headwaters Ecologically Sensitive Landscape. The whole point of the proposed donation is to conserve them in their current state. A parking lot would have numerous unacceptable impacts on this environment.
- The Schneider family and rare have proposed alternative solutions such as traffic-calming measures and enhanced signage to improve roadside parking around these lands, and at the Council's May 2023 meeting, it was decided that planning staff should work collaboratively with the City of Waterloo to have such solutions in place by the end of 2023. That deadline has not been met.

On a personal note, my family has skied and hiked Schneider Woods for many years. We have never had any issue with parking or traffic, even with small children. As noted above, I really do not see how a small parking lot would be of any benefit as there will always be an overflow based on its popularity.

As you know, Jane Schneider is well into her nineties and would like to see the donation that she and her husband had planned become a reality while she is still here to see it. It would be a shame not to honour her wishes in this regard. It would also be a shame if the public were deprived of such a unique, special gift simply because Council had not been determined to work collaboratively and timely with all concerned parties to overcome whatever obstacles stood in the way.

Once again, I urge you to take proactive measures to cut through the red tape and make sure that these lands remain open for the public to enjoy in their current state for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Valerie Hall