

From: Jon Gleasman [mailto:jon@jongleasman.com]
Sent: Friday, October 28, 2016 11:11 AM
To: Jane Rasely <jrasely@bainbridgewa.gov>; PCD <pcd@bainbridgewa.gov>
Subject: In SUPPORT of the CUP at Lowery Farm

I would like to add my **support for issuing a CUP for the Madrona School at the Lowery Farm property**. Thank you in advance for rating through the following considerations.

-Jon Gleasman

There are a few points that may have gotten overshadowed in the typical concerns about noise, traffic, and parking.

*** The Waldorf philosophy is deeply intertwined with nature**

It is of extreme importance to our community that the curriculum and facilities integrate with nature and the land. The plan has the potential of serving as a model for other island developers on sustainable growth. The zoning requires that over 92% of the site to remain open, and I personally walked around the property with the children tagging and mapping trees so that we could design around keeping the majority of them. We are exploring ways to make the property carbon-neutral and low energy use. The landscape design is intentional and attempts to screen the majority of the property from the street.

*** Madrona is an important part of the Bainbridge Community**

Since 1999, the families that are part of the Madrona school have proven that they share the value of being an active part of the community. There is strong support in our 100+ family community for local business as well as volunteerism and donations to island organizations such as the Land Trust, Bloedel Reserve, and One Call for All. This community cares about the island, and its continued, sustainable growth - and doesn't want to see it become just another suburb of Seattle. Supporting the school supports that community.

*** Madrona is a draw for Bainbridge island**

The Madrona School was a big part of my decision to move to the island. Several other families over the past years have come to the island specifically for the Waldorf school, from Tacoma, Boulder, and Austin to name a few. These families have brought small business to the island, as well as the community integration I mentioned above. We also draw quite a few families from north of the island, who work, play, and shop on the island.

*** Ties to the farming history of Bainbridge**

The Waldorf curriculum includes practical arts, such as farming - allowing the kids to be connected to and participate on where their food comes from. From the strawberry farms in the early 1900s to the working farms today, the kids are living part of that history, and form deep ties to Bainbridge island as part of it. I recently attended the third grade's harvest dinner, where the kids helped prepare a meal entirely from the garden on the property, including flour hand-ground from the grains!

Finally, I want to discuss some misconceptions about the property.

*** Traffic**

We all understand that traffic is a concern and that having school here will change traffic patterns. What has not been discussed is exactly how, and what happens if different development occurs on the property.

First, any development of the property will bring workers, vehicles, and noise, so that is somewhat a moot point. Development will happen on that property, whether it is Madrona School or some housing developer. Bainbridge has also seen an increased amount of traffic coming from off-island during commute hours as Seattle grows and Kitsap county becomes attractive as a suburb. Again, this is nothing that we can change, and our project has no impact on that.

What our project does do is change the destination for our families from downtown Winslow to Madison and Valley. For those families that live east of Madison and those families coming from the North (with access via Day Road), it means that they no longer need to cross 305 at Sportsman club. For other families, it means they will now cross (in the opposite direction) in the morning for drop off - and yes, some of them will also come back the same way. Ultimately, it may be more of a net-zero change than not. But a traffic study is the only way to really assess it.

As to the concern about current back-up on Madison, since there the plans include a pull-through drive, back ups on Madison will not be an issue.

*** Parking**

We heard the concerns of parking, and during our last event partnered with Rolling Bay Presbyterian Church to provide parking and shuttle people to the event. It worked wonderfully, and there was absolutely no parking along Madison or in the surrounding community. The project plans include adequate parking for normal day-time activities of the school, including multiple drop-off/pick-up lanes that keep cars off of Madison. For events, there is both parking in the drop-off lane and overflow parking in the Meadow - in addition to the shuttles we have used before.

*** The mixed-use auditorium**

There has been some concern about our renting out our facilities to bands, weddings, and other such “for-profit” events. First, I want to clarify that this is not an auditorium with fixed stadium seating as many imagine, but it is a mixed-use space. That space would be used as a gymnasium, for string practice, as a cafeteria, for class plays, and of course for school meetings. It has a 400 person capacity, but it is not a 400 person dedicated auditorium. In addition, there is no intent to rent this space out for weddings, churches or the like, which I am sure comes from the next misconception.

*** Madrona is not affiliated with the Church**

Madrona simply rents space from Eagle Harbor Church for the school, and has no other ties to it. We will not be holding Sunday Services or weddings every weekend, etc. That conception is simply incorrect.

*** The Meadow**

Another concern I have heard is the “stadium lighting on the sports field” will cause light pollution and noise during sports games and such. Competitive sports are not a part of the Waldorf curriculum until high school (which we don’t have), and Madrona has no organized sports teams. The Meadow is an open space for the kids to run and play games like tag, race, tumble and other such activities. There will not be any cheering fans, weekend sports games, or any stadium lighting.

Thank you again for your time.