

From: Phil Rockefeller [mailto:rockberry@seanet.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 2:02 PM
To: PCD <pcd@bainbridgewa.gov>
Subject: Madrona School Application for Conditional Use Permit -- Lowery Farm Property

October 26, 2016

Mr. Josh Machen
City of Bainbridge Island

Dear Mr. Machen:

Please include this letter in the City file related to consideration of the request of Madrona School for a conditional use permit, enabling it to utilize a portion of the Lowery Farm property for the education of enrolled students preschool-through-8th-grade.

In support of the application of Madrona School, allow me to offer the following observations:

The School currently operates primarily at a church in downtown Winslow, in a setting that necessarily limits the outdoor experience so important to the education of children according to the Waldorf School philosophy, to which Madrona and the families served by it are committed.

The prospect of having more green space and meadow access, not to mention a farm right on campus, is very much in line with the hands-on, exploration- and experience-based Waldorf philosophy. Clearly, the Lowery Farm will offer an attractive space for the education of children of Island families, and will enable the School to play its full role among the diverse school offerings now available to Island families. At this time, students such as my granddaughter, Mira, are able to experience the farm and learn from that experience, but only once a week. The prospect of Mira being able to spend full school weeks at this site is exciting for her, her parents and grandparents.

Madrona has a relatively small student population overall, currently enrolling about 140 students: 45 in the three early childhood classes, a preschool and two kindergartens, and 95 in 1st through 8th grade. The young ages of the students and the overall numbers involved suggest limited impact on the Lowery Farm property, not to mention adjacent properties and roads.

It is my understanding that the School will fully abide by the land use protections of the City, including the provision that over 92% of the property will remain in open spaces.

In addition, the School's plan for site development demonstrates that all major trees on the property will be conserved, and that existing vegetation along Madison Avenue will be retained as a visual screen.

Finally, Madrona has responded to the concerns voiced by some local residents with plans that manage traffic, parking and lighting in a sensitive and responsive fashion. In so doing, it has shown itself to be a responsible non-profit entity and one that will function as a very good neighbor.

For these reasons, I urge the City to approve the conditional use permit for Madrona School at the Lowery Farm location.

Sincerely,

Phil Rockefeller
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