

Jane Rasely

From: Rod Stevens <rdstevensjr@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 30, 2017 2:28 PM
To: Heather Wright
Subject: Islandwood/ Blakely/ Wetlands

I checked, and this wetlands does indeed have the duck blind that is such an important part of the Islandwood experience. Our family lives down the hill from Islandwood, and we go there on open days a couple of times a year. When we walk the property, this is one of the places where we regularly stop, for in the winter there is almost always an interesting variety of waterfowl there. I would guess that almost every child that goes to islandwood, either to visit for the day or stay for several days, stops in at this wetland when there is water standing in it.

I'm attaching a rough composite I put together from Islandwood's trails map and Google map satellite view showing the relationship between the Blakely property and the wetlands. These are not precisely aligned, but they do show how close the school district's property is to the wetlands. The Islandwood map also shows that there is a trail running around the pond, which I would assume is actively used in teaching. A friend of ours heads up the graduate education program at Islandwood, and I will ask her what role this trail plays in educating the school children who come there. Suffice to say, I don't think it would be a good idea to have glass, heat pump and air conditioning noise, asphalt and grass fields intruding into what is supposed to be a wildlife buffer. As near as I can tell, the only reason the architects have pushed the building so far east and into the buffer is to make room for the bus turn-around, itself an asphalt wasteland.

Which brings up a larger issue regarding the relationship between Blakely School and Islandwood that has troubled me for some time: the lack of relationship between the two, either educationally or physically and environmentally. Both of our children attended Blakely, the younger finishing two years ago, and neither went on the Islandwood property more than once every two years, if that. They said that they would hop across the fence to retrieve soccer balls kicked over it, but other than sometimes walking to Heyday Farm, their classes rarely if ever went there.

Which is what makes me upset that rather than creating a new building and landscape plan that draws on and enhances the wetlands and buffer, BISSD's plan uses it up, that they are building on nature rather than in nature. This is what those who protect place call the "death of a 1000 cuts". We're losing our buffers along 305 and Sportsman's Club. Please don't relax the standards next to one of the island's real crown jewels, the bird blind and marsh at Islandwood.

By the way, I think it would be very helpful for all involved to have consultants create maps with a larger scale that will allow for fuller discussion of these contextual issues. If you look through just a keyhole, you may not see who is standing on the other side of the door.

Sincerely,

Rod Stevens
8700 Oddfellows

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