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From: Danielle Gordon [<mailto:danielle.gordon@atlas-made.com>]

Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:17 PM

To: PCD <[pcd@bainbridgewa.gov](mailto:pcd@bainbridgewa.gov)>

Cc: Missi Goss <[mgoss@madronaschool.org](mailto:mgoss@madronaschool.org)>

Subject: A letter in support of the Madrona School New Campus at Lowery Farm

Josh,

Please include this letter in your collection of communications in SUPPORT of Madrona School's new campus at Lowery Farm.

As a relative newcomer to the island (we moved here 4 years ago from West Seattle), I am dismayed at the amount of development I have seen just in that short period of time. When I refer to development, I refer to house dense subdivisions, and the loss of pristine, historical farming land and natural land in general. I live in the Bill Point neighborhood, one of the older housing developments on the island, and although my house represents the best of 1980's funky architecture, I feel good that I haven't felt a need to buy a brand new McMansion somewhere more rural on the island in order to feel connected to this land, and to this community. The amount of small homes being torn down in favor of 3,000-5,000 square foot homes is dismaying to say the least.

Every day I drive into town past the new housing loop on Wyatt, right before I reach Grow Avenue. There was a tree there that I adored watching during all its seasonal changes, and then one day, I peered to my right to see it torn down, and many more trees removed and construction vehicles flattening the land. At some point, a sign was erected, "A new community coming soon! Register now!". And I will admit to yelling at that sign on a daily basis, 'a housing subdivision isn't a community - Bainbridge is the community!'.

When the group of people affiliated with Madrona School came together to purchase the property at Lowery Farm, it was the culmination of a many year process to find the exact perfect place for our small Waldorf community to expand into. What I find really quite interesting is that no one in the vicinity of the farm property has yet to understand or really take the time to understand what the Waldorf philosophy and educational model actually looks like. I would have thought that with our small festival gatherings around the May Pole, or our annual Fall festival with a mythical dragon beast made out of middle schoolers in costume, the neighbors in the surrounding area would understand our community to be a gentle one. We are a gentle community interested in integrating fully with the historical legacy of this island.

When I see criticisms and fears expressed about our potential to be a loud school campus and to become a construction site removing all the trees, I really have to quietly chuckle to myself. The Waldorf philosophy is all about integrating the heart, mind and soul with the natural and artistic world. We look forward to integrating our children and our community with the land at Lowery, with the garden that has been born out of hard work and love, with the way we mark and acknowledge the passing of each season, of celebrating the natural. We have one of the only nature kindergarten programs that fully enables children to connect with the land, and to experience all it has to offer - even in the pouring down rain.

Let's not fool ourselves in pretending that if any other venture bought the Lowery Farm land conservation would be of utmost concern on their minds. If the farm property had been purchased by any number of local or out of town developers, there is an incredibly high chance the land would have been razed to put in either a long loop of tightly built McMansions or other blandly designed homes, getting the most bang out of their buck. We are seeing it in areas all over the island - the 8 acres on Finch, the multiple acres on Ferncliff about to become a high density condo community, the several acres on Wyatt right next to Grow - the list goes on and on, and these are all just

what I notice on my daily drives around town in the short period of time I've lived here - let alone the massive storage unit complex being built at Coppertop - development is happening on this island, but what Madrona school wants to do is to integrate ourselves most quietly and naturally with the beautiful land of Lowery, with the minimal amount of disruption and destruction.

Our plans call for conserving ALL of the major trees on the site, with only a minimal number removed. The city regulations require that we keep 92.5% of the property in open space! This would NEVER be the required amount of designated open space had the land been purchased for housing development. A project like ours is subject to a much higher level of scrutiny and accountability than any housing subdivision.

The various letters you have received in opposition to our project represent the small majority of people who frankly are exhibiting the tell tale signs of NIMBY'ism. Not in my backyard, no way. Our school has a track record of being a responsive and courteous neighbor. Our culture is to always work collaboratively to solve issues that arise. We have actively listened to neighbor concerns and acted immediately to work with neighbors finding immediate solutions. One case in point is our recent Michalemas festival where not a single car parked either on the shoulders of Madison, or in the Windsong Loop neighborhood across the street.

I am also struck when I hear people highlighting the point that we are a private school and that many children are brought to school by their parents. First of all, we joke the mascot car of the Waldorf community is either a Leaf or a Prius - quite a contrast to the gas guzzling, pollution spewing, loud large yellow busses you see driving all over the island for the public schools. Secondly, it is important to our community of parents, children, grandparents, teachers, and others to live lightly on the land, and to tread gently on it. It is simply not in our culture to behave differently, we won't have a large athletic arena because that isn't one of the principles of Waldorf education. We literally have a beautiful brass bell that the teacher on duty in the play yard rings to gather the children to come in to main lesson, there will not be electronic bells and horns and stadium lighting!

Having a broad array of educational choices - public, independent prep, Catholic, Montessori and Waldorf schools - makes our island more culturally vibrant and an attractive place for families to raise children which keeps more families rooted here. We are active participants in the living legacy of this island, we are connecting the older and newer generations of island inhabitants who greatly respect the island, it's beauty, it's richness in history, and it's close knit community. We are a positive aspect of this island. We hope you agree.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and please register this letter in support of the Madrona School's new campus on Lowery Farm.

Respectfully,  
Danielle Gordon  
10910 NE Bill Point Court