

Jane Rasely

From: Ron Peltier
Sent: Thursday, May 4, 2017 9:22 AM
To: PCD
Cc: Merry McAllister; Dana Halverson; Pat Egaas; Karla Holmes and Bill Eckel; Stuart, Barbara; Mary Beaubien
Subject: Madrona School: Forward to HEX

Hi,
Please forward this message to Stafford Smith, Bainbridge Island Hearing Examiner.

Mr. Smith, Bainbridge Island Hearing Examiner,

I'm writing to you as a citizen and neighbor of the proposed Madrona School on North Madison near Rolling Bay. I'm very concerned about the impact to our neighborhood, and the additional 720 vehicle trips that would be generated each day by the proposed Madrona School. A couple points I'd like to make for your consideration:

Conditional uses are required to be harmonious with the existing neighborhood

From the decision criteria for a major CUP:

D. Decision Criteria

1. A conditional use may be approved or approved with conditions if: a. The conditional use is harmonious and compatible in design, character and appearance with the intended character and quality of development in the vicinity of the subject property and with the physical characteristics of the subject property;

The Madrona School will generate 720 additional vehicle trips per day

The traffic study for this proposed use shows 720 vehicle trips added. This amount of traffic generation is not typical for a residential development. Very much to the contrary. It would contribute to congestion, increased noise, and impacts to air quality.

We have great public schools with declining enrollment

Bainbridge Island's public schools are well funded and a magnet for those choosing this as a place to live. BISD has special programs to meet diverse needs. Our public schools, however, are experiencing declining enrollment which is resulting in less financial support from the State. Private schools are a significant factor in that declining enrollment. The proposed Madrona School on North Madison would be the largest private school on the Island with approximately 200 students.

An appeal to basic fairness

The approval process for Conditional Uses at the City of Bainbridge Island is weighted heavily against neighborhoods when it comes to approval of conditional use permits. As large development proposals navigate the approval process the applicants develop a relationship with Planning Staff. Often Staff become advocates for the project. That has happened with the Madrona School proposal. Listening to Project Planner, Josh Machen, recently addressing the Planning Commission it was obvious he was advocating for the project. So was the traffic engineer, who at one point told the audience that the additional traffic generated by the school "won't be as bad as you think".

During the recent Planning Commission meeting to discuss the Madrona School the Commissioners struggled to identify conditions that would make the proposed use compatible with the neighborhood. They spent three meetings discussing the proposed school. For all the Planning Commission's deliberations, however, they never really came to a point of agreeing on conditions they felt would accomplish compatibility between the school and neighborhood.

What tipped the balance was a statement by the Project Planner, Josh Machen. Josh told the Commission that when the issue came to the Hearing Examiner it would be approved. He said it with an air of certainty that was not lost on the Commissioners. They obviously believed it to be true and the result was a somewhat defeated resignation on the part of the Commission to just make a recommendation, with conditions, and pass it on to you.

Perhaps Josh was right: the Madrona School's major CUP is going to be approved, and a lack of compatibility with the neighborhood isn't going to be an obstacle to that approval.

To be honest that's what I expect. I feel compelled, however, to ask you to take the decision criteria seriously when it comes to being harmonious with the surrounding uses. This proposed use should not be a fait accompli because of the momentum it's generated through the planning process or because of the support it has gained from the Planning Department.

Respectfully,
Ron Peltier
11186 Valley Heights Circle NE
Bainbridge Island