



Dear friends,

I have to confess... when we first talked about creating a petition and involving all of you in our efforts to save Stoneleigh, I worried. What if no one cared? What if Stoneleigh didn't mean enough to the community and our supporters? After all, we hadn't even opened the garden gates, so I feared Stoneleigh hadn't found a place yet in your hearts.

Well, I've never been so delighted to be wrong!

[Our online petition](#) has more than 21,000 signatures, and we've received so many offers of support that we're having a hard time keeping up!

Here are a few of the kind words we've received:

"[John and Chara Haas] were fine, humble citizens of the community, and their legacy should be celebrated and honored, not robbed. Few such estates remain, and this one should be treasured and protected. It is special."

"Green spaces are vital to the education and experience of young people, who can discover the lasting 'peacefulness and beauty' that was the wish of John and Chara Haas, whose ashes are scattered on their beloved Stoneleigh."

"This 42-acre property is a treasure and amazing gift from the Haas family to the community. As a community we are so fortunate to be able to preserve and enjoy this open space that enriches the quality of life for all of our citizens and future generations."

However, the Lower Merion School Board members and Superintendent Copeland have not relented in their pursuit of Stoneleigh as a site for a new school and

playing fields. A letter by Board president Melissa Gilbert and Superintendent Copeland published in the Philadelphia *Inquirer* recently reinforced this fact. They also seemed to minimize how significant a loss the community would suffer if Stoneleigh were taken.

We disagree.

The map below clearly illustrates how **the School District's plans for a sports complex would destroy the view of Stoneleigh's historic Meadow Vista**, designed by renowned landscape architects the Olmsted Brothers. **About 300 trees would be bulldozed, too.**

The plan the School District has shared with the public doesn't seem to take into account required **stormwater mitigation, adequate parking, restrooms, or enough field space for same-season sports.**

Beyond its devastating impact on Stoneleigh, the sports complex would create problems for the surrounding community. **How will they address the increase in traffic** their sports complex would cause for the already congested intersection of Montgomery Avenue and Spring Mill Road?

Despite our repeated corrections, the School District continues to mischaracterize this 6.9-acre portion of the gardens as "developable." To reiterate: **All of Stoneleigh is under easement. All of Stoneleigh is essential. All of Stoneleigh is a treasure.**

Map of Stoneleigh: a natural garden and its historic Olmsted Brothers-designed features with overlay of sports complex drawing shared publicly by the Lower Merion School District



If you haven't already asked the members of the School Board to save Stoneleigh, please email them at communitycomments@lmsd.org. Let them know that not one leaf, petal, or blade of grass at Stoneleigh is expendable. (Please share your email with us at info@natlands.org.)

Natural Lands will continue to do all we can to save Stoneleigh. **And I no longer worry—I know that you, our dedicated friends, will continue to have our backs!**

Many of you have asked for a way to support Natural Lands financially during this challenging time. **Please consider becoming a member, if you aren't already.** Or, if you would prefer, you may make an online donation [here](#).

Sincerely,

Molly Morrison

Molly K. Morrison
President



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