



STONEHURST

THE ROBERT TREAT PAINE ESTATE

November 16, 2017

FRIENDS OF
STONEHURST/

ROBERT TREAT PAINE
HISTORICAL TRUST

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City Clerk's Office
Waltham City Hall
610 Main St.
Waltham, MA 02452

Dear Clerk Malone,

The Board of the Robert Treat Paine Historical Trust (DBA Friends of Stonehurst) recognizes that the location of a new High School is a very important issue for the City of Waltham, and that the City must evaluate all options. However, we were dismayed to learn of the City Council resolution to consider the 25.5-acre Chesterbrook Woods portion of the Robert Treat Paine Estate as a potential site. The Board respectfully provides the following information about the property for the careful consideration of the Waltham City Council.

The City of Waltham was forward thinking in its desire to create open space for its residents when it acquired the 109-acre Paine Estate in 1974, and then again when it purchased the 25.5-acre Chesterbrook Woods in 2001 and decided to rezone the Woods as Conservation/Recreation in 2010. In 2001 and 2010, the City conveyed its intent to preserve the scenic woodlands, wetlands, outcrops and trails of Chesterbrook Woods as an extension of the existing 109-acre National Historic Landmark Paine Estate, reuniting two parcels of the Estate for a combined total of 138.5 acres of open space.

The entire 138.5-acre property was historically a part of the estate of Robert Treat Paine, who is nationally recognized for his tireless efforts on behalf of workers. More importantly, the property is associated with a towering figure in the history of land conservation, public parks and urban planning, Frederick Law Olmsted.

Olmsted designed the grounds at Stonehurst, the Robert Treat Paine Estate to seamlessly blend with the architecture of the house, and its cohesive organic design represents the emergence of a distinctly American artform inspired by the American wilderness. In the same way that Thoreau's cabin is inseparable from Walden Woods, the surrounding wilderness of the Paine Estate is an integral part of the whole.

Olmsted recognized how public parks are critical social institutions, essential to the ideal of democracy, playing a vital role in human health and spiritual well-being. He conceived the world's first system of national parks for "the free enjoyment of the people." His urban parks continue to serve as "the lungs of the city," absorbing pollutants and toxins and storing carbon dioxide to help offset the effects of climate change.

The Paines, through their philanthropic work, and Olmsted, through his design of public parks, embraced social democracy. This one-time private estate, now with full public access and owned by the City of Waltham, expresses those same ideals today. Each year, tens of thousands of Waltham residents and others visit the Paine Estate to walk the trails for exercise, refreshment and enjoyment.

A quintessential symbol of the reform, preservation and conservation movements spanning a century, the Paine Estate was selected above all other natural and historic sites in the Commonwealth as the perfect venue for the historic signing of the Community Preservation Act in the year 2000. Environmental Secretary Robert Durand described the act as "one of the most important pieces of environmental legislation in the Commonwealth's history [that] will allow us to preserve, protect and sustain our very way of life at a time when pressure to develop our natural places has never been more intense."

We appreciate the importance of the responsibility to determine a suitable location for the new Waltham High School. We hope that a review of all the options will result in a City Council determination to preserve Chesterbrook Woods as unspoiled wilderness for the enjoyment of generations of residents of Waltham in line with its earlier decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Treat Paine Storer III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small "III" at the end.

Robert Treat Paine Storer III
President

PS. Please provide a copy of this letter to all members of the Waltham City Council for their immediate review.

cc. Mayor Jeannette A. McCarthy and
the Waltham School and School Building Committees
(c/o Superintendent Dr. Drew M. Echelson)