

September 30, 2019

Scott R. Niehaus
Lombard Village Manager
255 E Wilson Ave.
Lombard, IL 60148

Dear Scott,

Thank you for the Lombard Commons Site Review you and Bill Heniff provided. We appreciate that Village staff would support a reduction of the open space requirement if we were located adjacent to a park setting. This could reduce our land requirement by as much as 35%, reducing the 5-acre requested parcel to 3.25 acres. Additional reductions in site size would be dependent on other variances related to parking and stormwater requirements.

We understand that your comments and insight are independent of any discussions or understandings on behalf of the Lombard Park District and that any petition for use of the Commons property would be subject to agreement with them. In addition, we recognize that Village staff review is the first step in any planning process and any variances to be granted are subject to public hearings before the Plan Commission and Village Board.

After careful deliberation, we have determined that a land swap with the Park District at the Grace Street site, with the reduced land size request, will be taken into consideration. However, we believe that the northeast corner of the Commons site would not be in the best interests of the community and have outlined those concerns below.

While no traffic studies have been conducted by us or the Village, the intersection of Grace, St. Charles and Parkside is a major concern. Additional traffic that a library at this location would bring would certainly add significant additional traffic to what is already a frustrating intersection for the residents of Lombard. Based on the strong and impassioned feedback we received from participants during our initial discussions about community needs for a new facility, our goal is to provide Lombard with a public library with more convenient access – including more handicapped parking spaces and the convenience of drive-through service.

Shared parking at that site would also compound the challenge that residents already experience finding a parking place to visit the pool during the peak months of June and July. The Helen Plum Library had more than 63,000 visitors during the months of June, July, and August, even as the building was somewhat nonoperational in early July due to an air conditioning failure. As summer is also the busiest time for the swimming pool visits and related traffic, we are concerned that shared parking would be problematic.

Based on the experience of other area libraries that have expanded their buildings, we also anticipate that a new Lombard Library with expanded programming and services will potentially significantly increase our daily attendance over current use.

An additional worry voiced by members of the community regarding the northeast corner of the Commons is the noise level from the pool and the ball fields. The Library is committed to providing the community with quiet zones within the building for reading and study.

Conversely, a library at the Grace Street location of the Commons site avoids the complications outlined above that come with the northeast corner of the site. Because it would have less traffic congestion, alleviate the need for shared parking, and be located further from the noisy pool area, that location provides a superior asset for the Lombard community—which I believe is the goal we all share.

The Library Board would like to limit future Inter-Governmental Agreements (such as shared parking and/or stormwater retention) as much as possible to allow for planning in the future without restrictions that may impede Library planning and decision-making on behalf of the Lombard community.

I think it is in everyone's best interest to expedite the start of this project. Creating another new set of building designs and conducting the various traffic, engineering and community reviews on a location that has clearly identifiable limitations may simply lead to another dead-end endeavor and further delay our progress.

Our team is willing to consider the conceptual plan for the Grace Street option (with reduced land requirements based on less open space) within the Commons for a potential land swap. We appreciate your time and attention, as well as your offer to provide technical support and guidance throughout the plan creation process.

Our next step would be to reach out to the Park District to see if they are willing to consider the Grace Street location as a viable land swap. At our last exchange, they were not. We are hopeful that your offer to reduce the open space requirement so that we would need less acreage might reopen the conversation.

Sincerely,
Barb Kruser