

Helen Plum Library and Lombard Park District Negotiations

In late 2018, the Library presented the community with detailed design plans for a two-pavilion building at the current location on Maple Street that did not infringe on the Park's property or air rights. Those plans were well received by Lombard residents. The only detail that prohibited the Library from presenting the construction plans for the two-pavilion building design to the Village Plan Commission was the Park District's approval of a shared access drive to the Coach House located in Lilacia Park. A detailed history of our communications and negotiations is available on the Helen Plum Next Chapter website. <https://helenplumnextchapter.org/>

During all of our ongoing discussions with the Park, the Helen Plum Library, and many Lombard residents, firmly believed that building a new library at its current location, adjacent to Lilacia Park, for the following reasons:

- Preserving our significant, unique historical link to both Lilacia Park and the Plum family was important to us as well as the history of Lombard.
- The Library currently has more than 255,000 visitors each year. Moving the library to another location would eliminate foot traffic from the Library to downtown. A new building would attract more visitors and increase foot traffic even more.
- The location is walking distance for students in the immediate area and provides the option of classroom or afterschool visits.
- Metra commuters have easy access to the Library, especially with the new drive-through feature.

As it had been several years since the referendum had passed, and increased tax revenue for the project was being collected, the Library Board made the difficult decision to consider alternate locations, which unfortunately would require purchasing property.

On several occasions, Park officials had suggested that the Library consider a land swap to relocate to another park property. So in an effort to move forward with the Library's responsibility, in November of 2019, the Library offered a land swap proposal for 3.25 acres at the southwest corner of the Lombard Common. The Park District Board rejected that offer.

The options for a location for the new Library were very limited with lack of suitable, vacant property available in Lombard. In a final attempt to come to a satisfactory agreement with the Park District, we were asked to again consider their November 2017 proposal. <https://helenplumnextchapter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/11-06-17-Letter-to-H.-Metz-re-Helen-Plum-Library-Offer.pdf>

The Library was not able to accept that proposal at that time for a number of reasons. One was the uncertainty of assurances from the Village of Lombard that setback and other required building variances would be approved. Recently however, Village officials reach out to offer insight on their

variances in a meeting including Park and Library officials. The Park resubmitted their proposal to us with a lengthy list of their requirements.

The Library considered the following when they determined that the final Park proposal would not be suitable as a design for a modern 21st century public library.

1. Although the Park's plan waives the current air rights restrictions from the 1977 IGA, they are seeking a **new** IGA that would prohibit any future Library Board to approve any future additions in "height or width." The new IGA would limit the Library's ability to build to only one story on our current vacant west lot, essentially saddling a future Helen Plum Library Board with another set of limitations that has resulted in our current dilemma.
2. The Park's plan would relinquish the current Library plaza deck property and the building space below that now houses both our Adult and Youth Services collections. Once the building is demolished, that portion of the land would be owned by the Park and landfilled to the original grade. They are essentially asking us to construct a new building and then bury the entire north portion of the first floor.
3. This would eliminate the ability for the north side of the first floor of the building to have any windows or natural light, as it does currently. Adding more natural light to the new building was one of the community's priorities.
4. The Park also sought approval of Library design materials on the north of the building and no rooftop units to be located on the west portion of the building.
5. The Park is asking the Library to pay for paving the entire area around their Coach House and to contribute funds for Lilacia Park landscaping.
6. The long, narrow footprint of the plan is a subpar design that would stretch from Park Ave. to the western portion of the library lot and would add impractical day to day logistical concerns to the Library's operations.
7. The Library and much of the community have always sought to build a new facility that enhances Lilacia Park. We feel that the Park's requirements in their final proposal seeks to camouflage or hide the view of the building as much as possible. This is in complete conflict with the original intent of Colonel Plum's will and vision of a library in a park, as well as our initial vision and intent.
8. The decision to remain at the current location would necessitate relocating the library to an interim location at a cost of approximately \$1.5 million. The community has already had the completion of a new library delayed for more than 3 years. In an interim location, the community would also have to endure at least an additional year and a half of reduction in service, including minimal programming and limited access to the collection.
9. Based on our history, negotiations with the park on all of the above and likely many other factors will inevitably cause lengthy delays. The anticipated multiple design revisions and many legal communications will add to the costs and delays to moving forward with the project.