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October 8, 2021

Dear Library Community:

It is with regret that I inform you that the Haverford Township Zoning Board voted against the Library's zoning request to expand our existing library, which would allow us to provide the type of library we believe is needed for the 21st century.

It has been more than forty years since any meaningful improvements have been made to the Library. During that time virtually every other library in Delaware County as well as Lower Merion Township have renovated and or expanded their libraries.

But the Zoning Board by a vote of 3-2 voted against our plans despite the overwhelming approval by our elected officials -- the township commissioners. Most importantly, there were no objections from any residents, including those that live adjacent to the Library. In fact, many wrote letters of support.

After two hearings during which we produced experts—library professionals, civil engineers, and traffic experts—and answered all the questions asked of us, the Zoning Board rejected our applications last night. Chairman Bob Kane and Voting Member Jessica Vitali voted yes; Voting Members Edward Magargee, Jesse Pointon and William Rhodes voted in the negative. No specific reasons were given at that time. Once we receive their written opinion, we will decide what our options are.

Our plan to expand the second floor would have provided the Library with 25 percent more space, and brought our footprint closer to the national average. It would have allowed us to provide more services and better space for our patrons—private tutoring rooms, an innovative technology space for our children, teens, and adults.

Was it perfect? Of course not. We would still be left with inadequate on-site parking (though we have more than 200 on-street spaces in the area.) But it was our last best hope. Over the years, we have explored a half dozen sites, including most recently the old Brookline School site. But for various reasons, including cost, none of those options proved feasible.

As one of the zoning commissioners, Jessica Vitali, who voted for our request, stated, “the Library did the best it could given what it had to work with.” Or as the expression goes, “perfect is the enemy of good.”

We will keep you posted as to our next steps. If you have any questions or suggestions feel free to contact me at [goldsmith@haverfordlibrary.org](mailto:goldsmith@haverfordlibrary.org).

Sincerely,

Phil Goldsmith, President, Library Board of Trustees