



Statement Regarding Architectural Selection

April 23, 2021

The La Grange Park Public Library has asked its attorney to review the selection of 845 Design Group as the architect for its upcoming construction project. Jamie Zaura, a Village Trustee, is a partial owner of the firm providing services to the Library District.

The Library's attorney has concluded that no statute exists which would prevent the Library from doing business with a person serving on a separate municipal board. Thus, no statutory conflict of interest exists. In addition, the Library's attorney has concluded that because Ms. Zaura is not an elected or appointed officer of the Library Board of Trustees, and would never be called upon to vote on any contract or other business coming before that Board, there is no conflict at all.

The Library and the Village are two separate governmental entities. The officials of one are not officials of the other, and the employees and contractors of one are not the employees and contractors of the other. This is an important distinction that should not be ignored.

The Library is bound by law to select professional services, such as architectural, based on which company is the most qualified. The Library Board conducted their search for an architect within the limits of the law and four firms submitted proposals to complete the work. The Library interviewed the two highest qualified architects and ultimately chose the firm that most closely matched the set criteria and which would provide the most comprehensive restoration of the Library. The Board approved this choice in an open meeting in January of 2021. There was no communication at any time between Village staff or trustees and the Library staff or trustees prior to making the decision. To suggest otherwise is completely false and calls into question the character of those who donate their time and energy to serve in civil capacities.

The Library Board considers many factors when making a decision. 845 Design Group is a highly qualified, women owned business located just down the road in La Grange. Their presentation to the Library Board and facility committee included highly qualified staff, particularly a librarian who has worked on renovating a library with virtually the same problems the La Grange Park Library is facing. They brought in an impressive consultant to test and evaluate the building enclosure and make certain no issues will arise after construction. The firm promised to engage the community during the design process which they have already done through a survey taken by over 200 residents, extensive interviews with library users, staff, and business leaders, and considerable time and energy put into consolidating all feedback into actionable steps. Village Trustee Zaura is invested in the community and knows the town and surrounding areas well. The work her firm has done in and around town is impeccable and serves as representative of the excellent work she will do for the Library. She is a resident of La Grange Park and a Library user who visits with her children. The best choice to lead this renovation project was and still is 845 Design Group. The only motivating factor in choosing this firm is the Board's belief that they were the most qualified and no legal reason existed to disqualify them.

Residents can learn more about the history of the building project, the extensive planning work that has led up to this point, and how the community has been involved by visiting: lplibrary.org/building-project.

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