

## Report: Opportunities and Constraints for Property Use

On July 13, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. I met with the Village of Vernon Hills Director of Community Development Mike Atkinson for a general review of the opportunities and constraints regarding our property, particularly as it comes to expansion or remodel.

Christ Lutheran is located in a Public & Institutional Buildings District (PIB), which was set up when the subdivision was established. Municipal Code, Appendix C, Section 16A further details the regulations of a PIB. The Municipal Code is posted on the Village website, [VernonHills.org](http://VernonHills.org); referenced pages provided as hard copy.

To remain compliant with the PIB:

- The property must remain in use for an approved PIB organization
- The property must retain at least 80,000 square feet (which is roughly the amount of property that runs from Greenway Drive to Deerpath to the north edge of our building and back to the easement)
- Setback is no less than 40 feet from structure to property line (per Village Code), in addition to Municipal Code requirements for fire lanes, set backs, berming, screening, etc.
- Parking must be provided at a ratio of at least 1 parking place to every 3 seats; new construction parking lots will likely require underground water retention, curbs, etc. (Our current flat lots are grandfathered in; any new lots would follow new requirements.)
- In our case, we also have a wide easement between us and the pond, which is owned by the Park District.

Per our discussion, one of our biggest issue is traffic and parking. The increase in traffic on Deerpath and in the Village creates a different situation than when the building was constructed and plans were made for a future parking lot on the north side. Deerpath, which is considered a primary feeder road to Route 60, has a natural pinch point right in front of our building. It is highly unlikely that the Village will allow curb cuts or median cuts to create proper left or right turn-outs any farther north than our current south lot entry. The entry from our small front lot will no longer be an option for access any new lot constructed on our north side as it does not support left and right turns, but rather requires drivers to make a U turn to go south. Director Atkinson noted that traffic studies play a huge role in the Village allowing particular uses, especially with properties along main roads.

Director Atkinson noted that our property was developed for a small church and is at some level expected to remain a small church. In his experience with other projects, we could likely expand a bit, however the constraints of traffic, ingress and egress combined with the constraints of the PIB make our location unsuitable for much more than it currently is. He was clear that in his opinion, no way would anything close to a “mega church” with large inflows/outflows of traffic be allowed. He also noted that due to age and construction methods, our building would likely not be suitable for an addition – if we wanted a different type of sanctuary, it would be more economical to tear it down and start again, rather than retrofit the existing structure and tie it together.

Quick Village computations (not official) indicate we currently have approximately 136 feet between our north edge and Countryside Fire, which gives us approximately 95 feet in play under our current configuration while maintaining the 40 foot distance. Mr. Atkinson suggested if we want to have opportunity to later reconfigure the sanctuary, we could allow ourselves a wider swath. He reinforced that though modest expansion is certainly possible for us, approval of any substantial expansion of either building or parking would likely face substantial obstacles due to increased traffic and the need for safe ingress/egress to expanded parking.

Mr. Michael Atkinson, Director of Community Development for the Village of Vernon Hills, can be reached at [MikeAt@vhills.org](mailto:MikeAt@vhills.org) or by calling Village Hall at 847-367-3700.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lynn Brandl  
7/16/21