



**DONALD P. SCHOENHEIDER**  
MAYOR

July 14, 2014

As Mayor of the City of Lake Forest, I would like to thank the community for the public discussions to date on the proposed Amberley Woods Commercial Center on Route 60. The discussion for this site will continue. It is important to understand that this property, located on the southeast corner of Route 60 and Saunders Road, is already planned and approved for commercial use. This is a prominent site because it is an area considered one of the “gateways” to our beautiful city and is one of the last properties available for development along the Route 60 Corridor. If a plan were presented to enhance the historic and architectural integrity of Lake Forest, the City Council and many in the community have made it clear that there is interest and support for a mix of retail, restaurants and service businesses at this site.

After several months of study and public hearings, presentations by the developer, and public testimony that spoke to all sides of the issues, the City’s Plan Commission forwarded a series of 25 recommendations regarding the proposed Conway Market project to the City Council. Each Alderman devoted considerable time studying the various aspects of this issue along with the detailed plans from the developer and the impact it would have on the entire community. The Aldermen also reviewed the developer’s plan in conjunction with the “*process*” for the approval. Issues that were considered include, but are not limited to:

- Proposed uses and density
- Revenue potential
- Compliance with policies and regulations
- Impact of traffic to the area
- Neighborhood compatibility
- Potential preservation of an existing building
- Tree removal and drainage.

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, the City Council heard directly from the petitioner and listened carefully to residents’ testimony on both sides of the issue. From a procedural perspective, the Council had no mandate to hear public testimony; the Council did so to give all interested parties a fair opportunity to express their position. Following, each Alderman thoughtfully and candidly summarized their position and offered direction to the developer. The developer unequivocally stated that he could not implement some of the recommendations and would not change the plan to include the 100-foot setback and stated that he would withdraw his petition.

Throughout the City’s public hearing process on this matter, many speakers referenced the City forefathers who faced the very same difficult decisions over the past 150 years that we face today; attempting to balance development and vitality with the important community qualities that define who we are. We take the results of these challenging development related decisions for granted every day as we enjoy the natural beauty of Lake Forest’s open spaces; the diverse and stunning architecture throughout the community; the high quality of businesses and institutions located here and the splendid and magnificent beauty of our beach. It is through the involvement of our residents, our devoted volunteers and the City’s thoughtful, comprehensive, and sometimes lengthy, review process that will allow us to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with those offering proposals for change. I am confident that together, we shall achieve an impressive commercial development on Route 60; one that preserves the community’s character and standards, while at the same time, adds to the community’s distinction and vitality. We live in an extraordinary place, and together, we will find the right solution for this site as we have done so many times in the past.