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LETTERS

Family appreciative of Lewiston-NOTL Rotary, community

In 2011, our daughter, Lily, was born with a severe congenital heart defect, resulting in an immediate need for heart surgery. Lily was born at Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo and needed to be transferred immediately to the Golisano Children's Hospital in Rochester for heart surgery to repair several conditions with her heart. Lily would likely be in the Rochester hospital for several weeks, recovering.

Residents of Lewiston, we never gave a thought to where we would sleep, eat or anything else during those weeks. A nurse at Women and Children's took the initiative to contact the Rochester Ronald McDonald House and made arrangements for us to stay with them.

Rochester currently has two Ronald McDonald House locations. One is within the hospital - the floor immediately above the pediatric cardiac unit. We were able to remain in that house for Lily's entire stay in the hospital, never needing to worry about a place to rest or receive a meal. With two children at home currently in school, this was a huge burden we did not have to endure, thanks to the Ronald McDonald House Charities. Their kindness and support during that difficult time for our family was truly overwhelming.

Lily was transferred back to Women and Children's Hospital in Buffalo and we were showered with Christmas gifts from Ronald McDonald House Charities for the entire family as we departed that day. Lily is now 4 years old, and, since then, the Ronald McDonald House Charities have been a cause very near and dear to our hearts.

This past summer, we were invited by the Rotary Club of Lewiston/Niagara-On-The-Lake to share Lily's story and our experience with Ronald McDonald House Charities at one of their meetings. During that meeting, we mentioned that our family and friends have set up lemonade stands in the past to raise awareness and donations for RMHC. The Rotary Club invited us to set up a lemonade stand at this year's Lewiston Art Festival within its food tent. Together, we raised \$700 to benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities! We were blown



away by the generosity of the people attending the festival, and the Rotary members themselves. They were so supportive of our efforts, and our cause, and provide such wonderful support to our communities. We are truly grateful and humbled.

Dominic and Heather Notarianni

Machelor questions Village Board's decision to form HPC

In regard to the Sentinel articles of Oct. 1, I would like to make the Village of Lewiston residents aware of what has led to the current confusion regarding the recent request to subdivide the Frontier House property.

Here is the sequence of events since last spring.

The Planning Commission assumed the duties of the Historic Preservation Commission in 1996. At the time, there was considerable difficulty in filling the Historic Preservation Commission seats. Sec 15-103 (h) reads: "During such time as there are less than four members constituting the Historic Preservation Commission, the duties of the Historic Preservation Commission shall be performed by the Village Planning Commission."

Since then, the HPC/PB has examined, approved or disapproved many historic preservation certificates of appropriateness for historically designated properties. Village reports of historic certificates, historic designations and the like were submitted to the State Office of Historic Preservation on an annual basis.

In May, the mayor and trustees separated the two commissions with no notification of, or consultation with, the Planning Commis-

sion, nor any notice to the public. Specifically, there was no opportunity for any village resident to apply to sit on the separated Historic Preservation Commission as required by the village law. Sec 15-103 (b) reads: "Said members shall be residents of the Village." In legal terms "shall" always means "must."

When the Village Board acted, they also apparently waived these requirements.

The mayor and the Village Board proceeded to appoint six new members of the Historic Preservation Commission: one sitting member who is a resident of the village, one alternate member who resides in the village, and four members who are residents of the town.

These actions are against the village code - a code which the Board of Trustees has sworn to uphold.

The Planning Commission has the sole authority regarding subdivisions. The relevant section is found in Appendix A of the code, page CDA: 3, Article 1, Declaration of Policy, which reads: "In order to better implement the Zoning Regulations and as a restatement of the authority previously given under section 5 of the Village of Lewiston Planning ordinance, the Planning Commission is authorized and empowered to approve plats showing lots, blocks or sites, with or without streets or highways, to approve development of entirely or partially undeveloped plats."

Article 1 continues with a range of duties of the Planning Commission. Quite extensive thought has been given to ensure an orderly development of properties in the village.

The recently proposed subdivi-

sion has not been submitted to the Planning Commission. Instead, Hastings Lewiston Inc. was told that they were required to meet with the newly formed Historic Preservation Commission for their approval.

Obviously, the appropriate course of action should have been to submit subdivision plans to the Planning Commission, who, upon study of the plans, could refer the project to the Historic Planning Commission for their recommendation for "historic appropriateness."

Only the Planning Commission has the authority to grant subdivisions. Please remember that the Planning Commission, and all other village advisory boards, are composed entirely of village residents, as required in the law.

In spite of the confusion and legal problems with the separation of these two commissions, the mayor and the Board of Trustees plan on continuing this path and will attempt to amend our local law sec. 15-103 (a) referenced above and continue the policy of waiving the requirements that commissioners "shall" (must) be village residents. The merits of those selected for boards is important only after they have met the requirements of the law. The Village of Lewiston has a wealth of qualified, interested people who would like the chance to serve the community on the various advisory boards (Planning, Zoning, Parks and Recreation, and Conservation). These are your neighbors who reside and vote and serve as elected officials - all residents. They (and you as a resident) must be given priority.

Hastings Lewiston Inc. should be able to pursue the development of their property and be assured that the "rule of law" is still in effect in the village. As owners, they should have confidence that matters presented to the Planning Board will be considered in a professional matter in accordance with the code.

As chairman of the Planning Board and chairman of the Historic Preservation Commission for over two years, I call upon the Village Board to follow the law and appoint only village residents to our advisory boards. The consequences of waiving the requirements of the law can be harmful to our village in many ways.

*Norman R. Machelor
Chairman
Village of Lewiston
Planning Commission*

Lewiston-Porter Sentinel

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The Sentinel is published weekly.

Display Ads Deadline: WEDNESDAY 5 PM

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