

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **New [Website](#) Launched to Correct False Information Surrounding South Barrington Land Sale**

*Fourth Avenue Gospel, developer of “Area N” into a proposed church and school, refutes myths being spread by anti-religious opposition*

*Local developer counters with facts on how the sale will provide Parks District \$1.725 million in much-needed funds to modernize existing facilities that benefit the community, without raising taxes*

**South Barrington, IL, Sep 25, 2023** - The South Barrington Park District’s proposed sale of a parcel of land known as “Area N” to a local company, which plans to construct a new school building and church, has been subject to rampant false information.

Now the developers, Fourth Avenue Gospel Building, Inc. (Fourth Avenue), are correcting the record with the launch of a new website, [The Truth About Area N](#).

A small but vocal local opposition, bolstered by anti-Church antagonists from outside the state, has distorted the facts to try to force the South Barrington Park District board members to reverse their decision to approve the sale of the site.

The site is known as Area N. It is an overgrown area of scrub brush that is not being used as a park. It has sat vacant for the past 19 years, during which time the Parks District has been unsuccessfully trying to sell it. Developers have repeatedly walked away from the property. The last two offers for the property were \$1 million (2020) and \$1.6 million (2021). Now, the Parks District has received a new bid from a committed developer at a higher price -- \$1.725 million.

Putting the property up for auction was approved by a public referendum vote of the community earlier this year. The winning bidder – Fourth Avenue – was then approved by the PD board members.

The \$1.725 million will help in modernizing existing facilities that benefit the community—without raising taxes. These are badly needed funds.

The website spells out the truth about the project and the developer. Fourth Avenue is a charitable religious organization owned and operated by a local congregation of the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church (PBCC). The Fourth Avenue congregation is a small group (about 65 families and just over 200 persons) that has been living in the greater Chicago area since the late 1800s. Their congregation has a history of community service and supporting local citizens in times of need through its Rapid Response Team volunteer arm.

The Area N was put up for public auction earlier this year by the South Barrington Parks District. Fourth Ave Gospel's \$1.725 million bid for the property was the highest bid received in this auction, and it was the highest bid that has ever been received for this property.

Fourth Ave Gospel has put time and effort into carefully developing plans for the property that are environmentally conscious, low density and that will add substantial value to the South Barrington community. These plans will turn an undeveloped, unsightly lot into a beautiful site that includes a new place of worship and state-of-the-art school.

The school building will be the newest campus of OneSchool Global, an innovative, cutting-edge school with over 120 campuses in 20 countries. There is no religious instruction at OneSchool Global. In all of its jurisdictions, it follows a curriculum and set of academic requirements that is approved by the state, including here in Illinois.

The school campus will include educational areas, a gym and kitchen. Within the school, there will be a school store run by local church members.

Opponents of the sale are being fueled by anti-religious prejudices being spread through false information from outside the community. The website directly refutes this information and reflects the transparency of Fourth Avenue's proposal for the future use of the site and the nature of the church and the proposed school.

Some of the myths that the new website corrects include:

**MYTH:** *The opposition to the Area N development is being led by local concerned citizens.*

**FACT:** The main instigator of the attacks on the Area N project is Richard Marsh, who left the PBCC years ago after he killed a mother of three in a car crash, for which [he was criminally charged](#).

The courts have confirmed that Marsh is a liar. He has been sentenced to prison in his home country (England) for his repeated contempt of court. Marsh has never lived in nor has any connection to South Barrington.

Click [here](#) and [here](#) to see the details of the court judgments against Marsh.

Marsh often tries to conceal his lies on social media by posting under the fake name "Muhammad Sohail."

**MYTH:** *"Lack of Transparency": The Park District and the Village have been working with Fourth Ave Gospel since January 2022, unbeknownst to the community. They've also misled people about how the sale would affect taxes.*

**FACT:** Fourth Ave Gospel has cooperated with local authorities at every step along the way and has been fully transparent in providing impact assessments and plans to locate a church building and a school on the property.

The connection between Fourth Ave Gospel and the PBCC congregation was fully disclosed since the developer first expressed interest in properties on public record as early as 2020.

The fact that the end user of the development is a not-for-profit tax-exempt entity was clearly stated on the record. All Village and Park District meeting records are public record.

The Park District has acted within its authority, and the developer remains committed to working with the community, as demonstrated in its recent hearing and in the developer's consideration of specific community concerns.

**MYTH:** *“Selective Advertising”: The Park District intentionally targeted residents least affected by the sale while neglecting to inform those who would be most impacted.*

**FACT:** Fourth Ave Gospel has been informed by the Park District's legal counsel that all required notifications according to routine and pre-approved procedures were followed.

**MYTH:** *“Pre-arranged Sale”*

**FACT:** At no point was there any pre-arranged sale.

The Park District informed Fourth Ave Gospel that a public auction would be required for the sale, whereby any potential buyers could be present to place bids on the property.

Fourth Ave Gospel was the highest bidder and operated in full transparency throughout the process.

**MYTH:** *“Pre-Approval”: The Park District walked Fourth Ave Gospel through Village pre-approval processes months before allowing the community to vote on the sale.*

**FACT:** Fourth Ave Gospel expressed interest in multiple properties throughout the area and conducted typical due diligence on this property.

The current zoning classification for the property allows for church and school use.

**MYTH:** *“Values and Future Use”: The Church's proposed use includes an elementary school building that contains a liquor store, conflicting with South Barrington's community values.*

**FACT:** This is a lie.

The development includes plans for a small school store operated by the Church. There will be absolutely no alcoholic products sold on the property. The project is led by local developers who have served the community for decades.

To suggest that these upstanding community members would undermine “community values” is absurd.

**MYTH:** *“Sanctity of Park Space”:* Area N has been a public park for 21 years, benefiting everyone. The proposed sale turns it into a private asset that serves no local resident.

**FACT:** Area N is a completely overgrown area of land owned by the Park District, not currently used as a public park.

The community expressed its desire to develop Area N when it previously voted to approve a sale in the local referendum. This development will clean up this eyesore and complement the local community.

No one claimed Area N was benefiting the community until Fourth Ave Gospel proposed putting a church on the site, at which point anti-Church activists came forward.

**MYTH:** *The Park District purchased Area N twenty years ago for \$3 million. The fact that they’re now accepting \$1.7 million is a huge loss for the community and suggests that they gave Fourth Ave Gospel some sort of sweetheart deal.*

**FACT:** The original purchase of \$3 million for the property was paid above market value to settle a legal dispute with the developer of the Woods Community.

Since then, multiple developers have backed out of developing the property.

Fourth Ave Gospel presented the best legitimate offer in 20 years and was selected by the Park District in an open and transparent process. Fourth Ave Gospel’s plans will bring in far less traffic and disruption than the tract housing that had previously been planned for the site — plans that the community did not object to.

The present opposition is thus based on anti-religious bias, not on the merits of Fourth Avenue’s high-value, low-impact offer.

**MYTH:** *Fourth Ave Gospel’s development will destroy the wetlands and the walkability of the area. It will take away valuable land from the community.*

**FACT:** Fourth Ave Gospel has meticulously designed its plans to preserve the wetlands. Only 3.4% of the wetlands will be affected by the development and multiple experts

were involved in the planning, including civil engineers and wetland consultants. This is a very low impact percentage as compared to any previously proposed development work done on this property.

Years ago, Area N was stripped by its prior owner of any of its valuable trees, as confirmed by an expert arborist.

Fourth Avenue welcomes open debate and discussion about the project—but wants to ensure that it is based in truth. With a critical project that could substantially improve the South Barrington community on the line, it is essential that the record be set straight.

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#### **About Fourth Avenue Gospel Building, Inc**

Fourth Avenue Gospel Building, Inc. is a registered 501(c)3 public religious charity established in 1972. At that time, the church building was located on Fourth Avenue in Maywood, IL. Although Fourth Ave moved from that location in 1977, it has continued with the original corporate name. The principals of Fourth Avenue are members of the local PBCC congregation, and include longtime residents, citizens, and businesspeople who have supported their communities through small businesses, civic and social involvement, and charitable work.

#### **About the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church**

The Plymouth Brethren Church is a global Christian fellowship with a community of more than 50,000 members worldwide. It traces its roots to Plymouth, England, where its first gatherings began in 1829. The Church preaches a gospel of grace, godliness, and giving. Congregants live, work, and pray as 'Brethren'—a community of families held together by common Christian belief. The Church fosters family through its innovative OneSchool Global and serves the communities it lives in charitably through its Rapid Relief Team volunteer arm. Learn more: <https://www.plymouthbrethrenchristianchurch.org/>

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