

St. Joe's says it's fair

To the Editor:

On June 10 Saint Joseph's University filed a request for a special exception with the Lower Merion Zoning Hearing Board to permit improvements to the playing fields at the James J. Maguire '58 Campus. A special-exception request is an avenue open to any property owner in Lower Merion or any other Pennsylvania municipality. In fact the Lower Merion zoning board may hear numerous requests in a given year.

We are requesting the special exception because we remain committed to using the Maguire Campus for all that it represents: academics, administration and also athletics. In addition, the Maguire Campus has helped us expand our commitment to our communities. For example, while work was done on their pools this school year, the Lower Merion and Harrilton swim teams used our pool on Maguire Campus. In April, 30 Narberth Little League baseball players worked out with Saint Joseph's alum and Phillies pitcher Jamie Moyer on the Maguire baseball field when we recognized Jamie with an honorary degree.

Since January 2008 and as recently as last month we have talked formally and informally with neighbors more than a dozen times. Some of those conversations led to changes in our plans for Maguire Campus; others did not. We have been very open about our plans and in fact have been present at numerous township public meetings in addition to our discussions with neighbors. We understand there are some honest disagreements; however, we decry the blatant misrepresentations of the university that some have attempted to put forth.

We only entered the legal arena after the Merion Community Coalition formed in 2008 to oppose our plans and subsequently challenged the Lower Merion Board of Commissioners' approval of the tentative sketch plan for the Maguire Campus. That has led us to where we are today. We look forward to the opportunity to present our request to the Lower Merion Zoning Hearing Board.

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