



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 20, 2012

Ill. Catholic Convent Battling Construction of Porn Business Next Door

Residents of the Chicago suburb of Stone Park, Illinois, have joined the Sisters of a local convent in an effort to stop a \$3 million “porn palace” from opening next door to the Catholic facility. With the help of the Thomas More Society, a Catholic legal advocacy group, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo and Stone Park village residents are demanding that city officials put a halt to construction of the extravagant strip club, located several feet from the property line of the Sisters’ convent.



Thomas More’s executive director, Peter Breen, noted that the Catholic Sisters have long been a positive force in the community, and allowing a strip club to open next door to them is poor payback. “For over 60 years, the Sisters of St. Charles have devoted their lives to teaching the children of Stone Park,” he said, “service for which they’re now being repaid with a ‘porno palace’ towering over their convent.” He added that the club, with the sleazy moniker “Get It,” is being built in violation of state law. He added that “zoning permissions were given without notice to the Sisters, whose convent is located immediately next to this facility.”

At a village board meeting in mid-March, Breen pointed out to village commissioners that a state ordinance imposes a one-mile “buffer zone” between “adult entertainment” businesses and places of worship. He pointed out that the law effectively prohibits the strip club from locating next to the grounds of the convent, which includes several chapels.

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In April 2010 the porn club developer sued the Village of Stone Park for allegedly trying to force him to give the village part ownership in the illicit business in exchange for permission to build the facility. According to the Thomas More Society, the village settled the suit in August 2010, agreeing to repeal or amend numerous local ordinances and clearing the way for the porn business to build on the property.

Specifically, the village repealed a local ordinance, similar to the state statute, that imposed a thousand-foot buffer zone between adult entertainment businesses and such facilities as schools, parks, churches, and residential areas.



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At the village board meeting Breen explained that the “local buffer zone ordinances were never challenged in the lawsuit brought by the developer, nor could those ordinances be challenged, because they were valid and constitutional.” He exhorted village officials that “there was no reason to agree to the repeal of the ordinances protecting the people of Stone Park from strip clubs coming into their residential and other child-heavy areas.”

The Stone Park mayor claimed that the village opted not to defend itself against the porn business developer’s lawsuit because doing so would have cost the village a half million dollars. Additionally, village officials have discouraged residents and the Sisters from fighting the opening of the objectionable business in their community. Breen said, however, that the Thomas More Society would be happy to offer its legal services to the village free of charge should it choose to join residents and the Sisters in putting a stop to the strip club.

Breen said he does not know what happened in closed-door meetings between village officials and the porn club developer to override both local and state laws that should have barred the business from moving forward. “What we know today is that there is a massive pornographic mega-plex which is about to be opened,” he said, with a “‘dry run’ on April 1 and opening either during Holy Week or on Easter Sunday itself.”

He said that while the local ordinances were apparently dismantled, the state law banning the porn complex within one mile of a places of worship makes the business illegal where it is now located — a fact that he hopes to use to shut down the business before it gets off the ground.



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