

OFFICE OF
THE CHANCELLOR

October 1, 2013

The Mayor
The Board of Directors
City of Little Rock
Little Rock City Hall
500 West Markham Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: Technology Park

Your Honor and Members of the Board:

On August 14, 2013, I appeared before the Little Rock Technology Park Board to provide information about research and development activities at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and to share my thoughts about potential sites for the Technology Park. In that presentation, I told the Board that my University colleagues and I had concerns that none of the sites then before the Board offered optimal opportunity for the success of the Technology Park. I further stated that because of that concern, officials at the University had felt obliged to try to identify a better option. The end result was one that involved, unexpectedly, University property.

The area in question connects to the UALR campus on the northeast side and lies between Fair Park Boulevard on the east, Coleman Creek on the west, 24th Street on the north, and 27th Street on the south. This is an area that long ago was identified for future expansion of the University and has been included in our planning area. We have been buying properties as they have come on the market. If the Technology Park Board chooses another site, the University will continue to buy properties in the area.

The area, which includes a portion of a parking lot, totals 20.4 acres—more than half of which the University owns. Of the 65 individual properties, the University owns 31.

I advised the Technology Park Board on August 14 that the University would meet with people in the neighborhood to determine the feasibility of proposing that the Technology Park Board consider it as a potential site for the Technology Park. I have since participated in two neighborhood meetings that were well attended. We have also been endeavoring to contact all property owners in the area individually to determine their situations and potential interest in selling. Of the 34 properties the University does not own, 21 are rental properties, 12 are owner-occupied, and one is unoccupied. University personnel have been making excellent progress in getting in touch with the owners, and I will be able to report what we have learned to the Technology Park Board when it meets next week.

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The University has approached this matter in an open and wholesome manner. The University has further taken the position that, in the event the site were offered to the Technology Park Board for consideration, the University would not be willing to proceed and sell its property for the site unless the Technology Park Board embraced the Federal guidelines for fair treatment of both renters and property owners when private property is purchased for public purposes. This proviso has been reassuring to persons in the neighborhood. Further, there is considerable neighborhood pride in Fair Park Boulevard and the Board would need, as I am sure it would want to do in any case, to agree to keep Fair Park beautiful.

In all the years that UALR has existed as a state-institution—since 1969—it has never sought to claim eminent domain and condemn property. If the University encourages the Technology Park Board to consider this site adjacent to the University, it would be done with confidence that the Technology Park Board would also be able to purchase the properties and develop the site without use of eminent domain.

Best wishes.

Sincerely yours,



Joel E. Anderson
Chancellor

Dr. Don Bobbitt, President
University of Arkansas System