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City Council must continue transparency

To the Editor:

On Feb. 28, it was initially reported that the city of Elmhurst received a letter from the Illinois Attorney General's Office responding to a Request for Review of actions by the Elmhurst City Council. Since that time, there has been much discussion expressing concerns about the letter and the actions of the City Council. The Request for Review pertained to meetings held by members of the City Council in which it was alleged that discussions about the development and expansion of the "Addison Street Parking Deck" were held in violation of the Illinois Open

Meetings Act.

While there is no suggestion in the Attorney General's letter that the City Council's actions in holding these closed session meetings were purposeful or undertaken for any inappropriate reasons, this incident nonetheless underscores the importance of being ever vigilant in upholding not only the letter of the law of the OMA, but also the spirit of the law.

As a former assistant attorney general, former chair of the Illinois Executive Ethics Commission and current director of the Cook County Board of Ethics and Commission on Human Rights, I not only understand in theory the importance of open, transparent and accountable

government, I work every day to put the principles of the OMA into practice.

I commend Alderman Paula Pezza and the other City Council members who raised questions or concerns about this matter and the way in which it was proceeding. Elected officials are stewards of the taxpayers' trust, and as such are held to higher standards.

The Elmhurst City Council needs to be ever vigilant in protecting the interests of all of the constituents that it serves. The Council must continue to act with integrity and with the best interests of the taxpayers in mind — discussions held in

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the open will lead to decisions that will stand strong when evaluated in the light of the day.

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Congress shall make no law respecting an exercise of the free exercise thereof; or abridging the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to redress of grievances.