

McDonald's gets thumbs up on move

Written by CAROL POMEDAY
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Mobil withdraws its opposition to fast-food chain going to competitor

Plans for McDonald's Restaurant to move from Royal Avenue Market across Highway LL to How-Dea Mini Mart were approved May 6 by the Village of Belgium Plan Commission.

The fast-food restaurant will move into the space formerly occupied by Dairy Queen at 107 Lakeview Dr. The space has been empty since Dairy Queen closed in December 2008.

Dawn Bourseau of McDonald's corporate office said no decision has been made on when the move will take place, but July 1 was a target date. The Kilian Group in West Bend owns the restaurant.

Plan Commission members Pat Birenbaum and Jim Sprader voted against the site plan, saying the additional traffic could create a dangerous situation for vehicles exiting onto Highway LL.

Steve Jeske of Haag Müller Architects in Port Washington said there will be more room between the car wash and McDonald's because an entrance on the north side will be moved to the east side.

Three 10-foot-wide lanes between the buildings will be clearly marked for the restaurant's drive-through business, the car wash and exiting vehicles, Jeske said.

Yield signs and speed bumps could be added if there is a problem, he said.

Drive-through service would be available 24 hours, but it was the daytime traffic that worried officials.

When it was suggested traffic not be allowed to exit onto Highway LL but rather use the Lakeview Drive entrance, How-Dea manager Sherry Mulloy predicted that would not be successful.

"We can post signs, but it's hard to change people's habits," she said. "Maybe with the increased traffic, people will drive more sensibly."

Village President Kevin Kowalkowski said he was most concerned about cars waiting for the car wash stacking up along Highway LL.

"But I'm confident that it will not be an unsafe situation, which had been suggested," Kowalkowski said.

Commission member Ron Weyker noted the drive-through route and lanes are the same as when the Dairy Queen operated at that location.

The McDonald's building will have a new facade with a more contemporary look and the kitchen area will be enlarged, Jeske said.

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There will be a two-tone yellow metal awning over the new entrance and a curved design feature above the McDonald's name. The fascia will be terra cotta.

Scott Stangel of Quality State Oil in Sheboygan, who helped Talwinder "Tom" Gill get McDonald's to come to the community, told the Plan Commission

Gill is no longer objecting to the move.

Stangel said he is helping Gill find a new tenant for the space.

"We have some possibilities, but it's too soon to say anything. McDonald's hasn't given official notice that they're leaving yet," he said.

"All indications are that they are, but until they do, they own the space."

He said the contract calls for a 60-day notice, but the restaurant could move sooner and pay rent.