

Commission to consider appeal of Meijer plan

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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Petition asks village to reverse decision on permit allowing store to be built

In response to a petition from a local couple, the Grafton Plan Commission will this week revisit its approval of a conditional-use permit for the construction of a Meijer supercenter on the village's east side.

The petition, filed by Jack and Michelle Corrao, asks the commission to reconsider its Aug. 28 decision granting the permit for Meijer to build a 191,352-square-foot store on a 33-acre site east of Port Washington Road near Hunters Lane.

The project also calls for a parking lot for 681 vehicles and two out lots for future development.

The Corraos live in the nearby Hunters Crossing subdivision, where a number of residents have voiced concerns about the store's location and potential problems with traffic flow, noise, illumination and crime. Plans call for one of the supercenter's two entrances to be aligned with Hunters Lane, which enters the subdivision off Port Washington Road.

In their petition, the Corraos, 2474 Caribou La., state their "interests in the property will be adversely affected" by the village's approval of the permit.

The petition further states that the commission failed to adhere to a village ordinance regulating conditional-use permits by not adequately considering a comprehensive plan for the project and how it would impact surrounding development, traffic, public streets and utilities and the environment.

The petition also states the permit requires the project to meet "a demonstrated public need" and that the commission failed to consider alternative sites for the store.

In asking the commission to reverse its unanimous decision, the petition states that the "proposed use and development is not compatible with the surrounding area and the community character of the village."

The commission will meet at 6 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 4, at Village Hall.

Plans call for the supercenter to be open 24 hours a day and have employees on site around the clock. In seeking village approval, Meijer officials said they made numerous project changes in response to concerns, including dropping plans for a 2,460-square-foot convenience store with fuel pumps.

Village President Jim Brunquell and most other commission members said the project was carefully scrutinized and believe it will be an asset to the community. Police Chief Charles Wenten said he met with Meijer officials and residents to discuss store security and was comfortable with the company's plans.

Brunquell said the project "is consistent with the village's 2035 master land-use plan in the

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freeway corridor.”

Under a village ordinance, a conditional-use permit is required for any commercial development exceeding 50,000 square feet.

On Sept. 4, the Village Board approved by a 5-2 vote rezoning and a certified survey map for the project. The two dissenting trustees, Lisa Harbeck and Jim Grant, cited concerns with allowing 24/7 store hours and the review process.

At the same board meeting, residents of Hunters Crossing presented a petition signed by more than 100 people that asked the village to not allow 24/7 store hours, reduce the building size and further address safety concerns.

The Corraos filed their petition the same day, citing a state law that allows a request for review of the commission decision.

In a Sept. 26 report to the commission, Village Planning Director Mike Rambousek recommended approving a conditional-use permit and site plan for the project.

Those approvals, he said, should again require the Village Board to rezone the project site to a planned unit development and approval of land-use plans covering architecture, landscaping, utility extensions and stormwater management.

Rambousek also recommended that a development agreement for the project require the company to pay all off-site improvements and associated fees.

Pending final approval, Meijer plans to begin building the Grafton store next year. The store is expected to open in 2014.

The Michigan-based company also plans to build a supercenter in Franklin.