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News

'A much desired use': Hawthorn Woods approves development



Hawthorn Woods has given approvals and authorized incentives for about 24 acres at Old McHenry Road (bottom) and Midlothian Road (Valade/pvalade@dailyherald.com)



Mick Zawislak

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The table has been set to attract retail uses, to the long-undeveloped corner of Old McF Hawthorn Woods.

Village officials Monday approved measures to allow for commercial development of the 24-acre northeast corner and in a separate action authorized sales tax rebates to prime the pump.

The village of about 9,400 residents has been promoting economic development to generate sales tax and has designated the Midlothian Road corridor as a Town Center with zoning and utilities available.

However, this corner has remained undeveloped despite the efforts of the owner and “several highly regarded developers” and will remain that way without a financial incentive, according to the agreement with TEF Hawthorn Woods LLC.

Per the agreement, the village will rebate one-third of sales taxes generated by retailers to a maximum of \$1.5 million. The agreement is for 20 years but the village would have no further obligation if that amount is reached sooner.

The economic incentive also calls for a 33% rebate of village or state grocery taxes for 15 years if a food or grocery store of 4,000 square feet or larger is built.

“That’s very much a desired use by the village,” said property owner/developer Jonathan Berger.

Another element calls for an additional 20% sales tax rebate over five years if a “junior” or big-box store is built.

There are no announced users or detailed site plans for development but the planning and zoning approvals will allow the property to be marketed to potential users, said Chris Heinen, community development director.

Developing this site also will further development of adjacent areas, according to the agreement.

“The site is really in a better position to be developed,” Berger said. There always had been interest in the site but also challenges, including sewer issues that are being resolved and setbacks that have been reduced for retail uses.

Besides a grocery store, permitted uses include a gas station, quick-service or sit-down restaurants, pharmacies or coffee shops with drive-throughs.

Truck stops, repair and oil change shops, cannabis dispensaries, self-storage facilities and cell towers are among about a dozen prohibited uses.

About 30,000 vehicles a day travel past the site on Old McHenry Road. A planned underpass of Old McHenry Road at the railroad crossing under the jurisdiction of the Canadian National Railway just east should significantly increase the amount of traffic, Berger said.

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