

Thiensville development advances

Village amends land-use plan

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THIENSVILLE — Final designs and a firm construction schedule are still to be submitted, but plans for a retail and apartment development in downtown Thiensville cleared a first hurdle last week.

The Thiensville Village Board voted unanimously Jan. 21 to amend the land-use plan and the planned unit development ordinance. Both are initial legal steps required before the village can consider zoning changes.

The project is proposed for a long-vacant 5.46-acre L-shaped lot that wraps around the Walgreens at the intersection of Main Street and Freistadt Road. As plans stand now, the development includes:

- Two three-story apartment buildings with a total of 90 to 98 units

- A 10,000-square-foot retail building on Main Street on the southwest corner of the property

- A 6,000-square-foot to 8,000-square-foot retail building just south of Walgreens on Main Street

The Village Board's approvals were preceded by a public hearing. Several neighbors attended and asked questions about the project. There was no opposition, but several of the residents said they



Image courtesy of Eppstein Uhen Architects

A project proposed for the intersection of Main Street and Freistadt Road in Thiensville includes about 90 apartments, retail businesses and green space.

were eager to return when more-concrete plans will be on the table.

The project is being developed by Trish Jennings Ullrich and Maggie Jennings Beach, sisters who are related to the property owner. The property housed a strip mall, which was demolished about 20 years ago. Walgreens later built a store on the corner. The rest of the property has remained undeveloped.

The sisters — doing business as Nex-Jenn — are working with Milwaukee-based Eppstein Uhen

Architects. The firm's CEO, Greg Uhen, attended the meeting and walked village trustees through a PowerPoint presentation.

The buildings will incorporate architectural features that harken back to Thiensville's history as a mill town along the Milwaukee River with "a modern interpretation." He said the project will include "some interesting public spaces between the buildings."

That green space should prove attractive to nearby tenants as well

as others from the community who walk or drive to patronize the businesses or take advantage of the pocket park that will be part of the development.

Parking for apartment residents will be underground. Uhen said an exact number of spots has not yet been determined but will be in the neighborhood of 1 1/2 spots per unit. There will be additional on-site surface parking for visitors.

When Village Board members discussed the project, several

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—Rob Holyoke
Thiensville Village Trustee

trustees told the developers and architect that it is very important that sufficient parking is available.

Jon Censky, who performs contract work as a planner for Thiensville, said the next step in the process will be a request for rezoning changes. The Planning Commission and members of the public will then have an opportunity to see the developer's detailed plans.

All steps in the process will include final approval by the Village Board, Censky said.

While trustees had questions and suggestions, the developers' plans were met with general enthusiasm.

"I'm excited that after a couple of decades, I'm thankful someone is interested in doing something like this," said Trustee David Lange.

Trustee Sam Azinger said he wants to see details about the parking plans for the project, but added he has not heard objections from the public since the plans first were presented several months ago.

"I like it," he said. "It's a perfect place to do a large-scale project like this."

Trustee Rob Holyoke agreed. "It fits the parcel; it's classy," he said. "I think this will add to the walkability of Thiensville."