**Glenview Plan Commission: Residents voice opposition to development at Willow-Pfingsten intersection**



*A development proposed for the southwest corner of Willow-Pfingsten roads calls for a 35,000-square-foot grocery store and multi-tenant retail buildings totaling 28,600 square feet. Graphic courtesy of the Village of Glenview*

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A three-hour Glenview Plan Commission meeting, which included more than an hour of public-comment time, wasn’t long enough to unpack the details of a proposed development at the southwest corner of Willow and Pfingsten roads.

During its Tuesday, Aug. 27 meeting, the Glenview Plan Commission unanimously voted to continue the discussion until its Tuesday, Sept. 10 meeting, to further flush out the proposal.

Specifically, both the commission and the developer, GW Properties, hope to walk residents through the results of a traffic-impact study, which GW Properties claims should calm residents’ concerns that the project would hinder driving in the area.

Currently, the 8.5-acre property holds a two-story, single-family residence and several accessory buildings. As proposed, the development would replace those structures with several commercial buildings located on the north 6.2 acres of the site, including a 35,000-square-foot grocery store and multi-tenant retail buildings totaling 28,600 square feet. The project would also include six new single-family homes, served by a proposed extension of Charlie Court, on the south 2.35 acres.

According to Village documents, the applicant has not released the names of the potential restaurant or retail users due to confidentiality agreements.

In April, the developer first proposed building a grocery store, two drive-thru restaurants and a gas station with a car wash on the site. In response, more than 100 residents expressed strong objections to the proposed rezoning and auto-oriented land uses, according to Village documents — and the Village received dozens of letters and emails objecting to the project.

The residents were primarily concerned with potential traffic impacts; the proximity of commercial improvements to existing residences; and the proximity of other grocery stores, restaurants and gas stations.

Rather than move forward with its initial proposal, GW Properties revised its proposal to feature less auto-focused uses, settling on the version discussed during the Aug. 27 Plan Commission meeting.

“Perfection can’t hold up progress,” said Mitch Goltz, principal of GW Properties. “This property has been a single-family home for many, many years. … It’s going to get sold. It’s not going to stay a single-family home. The project we put forward today, we believe, takes advantage of the optimal development potential of the site and has the best impact to the overall community of Glenview.”

Still, residents spent more than an hour objecting to the proposed development, armed with many of the same general concerns, and they would’ve spent even longer if the Plan Commission hadn’t ended the meeting. Residents will have another chance to address their concerns at the follow-up meeting Sept. 10.

Glenview resident Carol Sullivan, who lives adjacent to the proposed development, kick-started the public-comment period by thanking the Plan Commission for hosting the discussion and allowing the nearly 200 residents packed into the meeting room to voice their concerns.

“I don’t think that happens very often,” she said. “There’s a lot of concern about this project, and the public has made a lot of effort in coming forward tonight.”

She then deferred to about a dozen of her neighbors, who voiced their individual concerns.

Resident Joan Gestrin asked the commission to assess the property based on Glenview’s current needs, not its needs from 1988, when the property was annexed into the village and officials laid the groundwork to potentially rezone it as a B-1 limited business district, when the village was actively encouraging a development on the site. She also referenced a petition — which has garnered 577 signatures from residents who oppose the development — as evidence that the proposal doesn’t fit Glenview’s current needs.

Brett Hanley focused his time on the possibility that vehicles will be trapped inside the property during peak hours, when cars tends to queue on Willow and Pfingsten roads and could potentially block the exits.

“If you look at that, where are they going to go?” he asked. “They’re going to redistribute through the neighborhoods, increasing traffic down Pfingsten, down toward the high school and down toward the hospital and create a much different traffic scenario for [those in the community].”

Goltz, principal of GW Properties, hopes to discuss traffic studies further at the next meeting.

As a rebuttal to residents’ comments on Aug. 27, Goltz limited his response to: “Speaking to the cut-through traffic in the neighborhood, you can’t control bad drivers. Regardless of what happens with this site, if someone wants to disobey the speed limit and cut through to avoid signs or speed bumps, that’s going to happen. It’s inevitable, but we aren’t trying to cause that.”

Other concerns revolved around how the development would handle deliveries to the various businesses.

“A lot of the shopping centers in Glenview have access drives that allow deliveries to occur without the truck needing to go in reverse,” Glenview resident Snehal Mehta said. “The way this development is set up is that trucks have to pull in front of the grocery store, make a turn in front of the grocery store, then drive in reverse and possibly make two reverse turns to get to the back of the building."

According to Goltz, that setup isn’t in the plans.

“We aren’t talking about trucks having to back up in front of the building,” he said. “The ideal and most likely source of delivery and loading would be coming from Willow Road, pull to the back of the building, make a quick back up and then pull out. If they need to go back out to Willow, then they will circulate the building, but in no case will trucks be pulling up and making three-point turns in front of the building.”

Goltz also addressed another concern — that the property wouldn’t be monitored efficiently.

“The residential portion for this property would be maintained under our eyes and control throughout our ownership,” he said. “To think it will just sit there and that abandoned cars will be left there is simply not an acceptable outcome. We also will be managing the center on a 24-hour basis, so it’s a misnomer to think it won’t be managed in a professional manner.”

The undertone of many concerns was the project’s density, and whether that would cause more traffic or lead to commercial buildings being constructed too close to residences and major roadways.

“When I look at the site and look at all problems we’ve been discussing, I think it boils down to that we’re putting too much into the site to even try to make it successful,” Glenview resident Tony Marabelli said. “Think about the retail issues that are causing problems today. As you know, we have openings in The Glen. Here, we might very well be planning the Titanic.”

The Glenview Plan Commission will reopen the discussion during its Tuesday, Sept. 10 meeting.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This article has been corrected to clarify that the property at the southwest corner of WIllow and Pfingsten roads was not rezoned in 1988. Officials passed an ordinance in 1988 that would rezone the property to a B-1 limited business district if an application for development is accepted by Village officials. The property is currently zoned as an R-1 single-family residential property.*