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Developer has plans for former Kennedy-Hahn site

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An Oregon developer has plans to transform the former Kennedy-Hahn Appliance store into a multi-tenant building.

The Waunakee Plan Commission approved a site plan at its Nov. 24 meeting that includes spaces for seven tenants.

"I congratulate you that you're transforming a nice site," said John Laubmeier, Waunakee Village Board president and chair of the plan commission.

Plan commissioner and village trustee Steve Kraus echoed that sentiment.

"It's a very visible site," Kraus said of the corner building at Main and Division streets. "It's a big intersection. It's part of our gateway into our community."

PLH & Associates, LLC presented a site plan that divides the building into seven tenant spaces, ranging from 1,208 square feet to 5,208 square feet. The former Kennedy-Hahn building has been vacant for about a year, since American TV purchased the company in September of 2007.

Village staff raised concerns with the parking plan, which initially called for 47 total stalls.

But representatives from PLH presented a revised plan that angled some of the parking spaces and created a one-way traffic pattern through the lot, allowing for 65 total stalls.

Village staff said they preferred the circulation in the initial plan.

"I like the plan. It works. But it would be confusing for the customer," John Stockham, village planning consultant, said about the revised parking plan.

He suggested that the developer pursue the original plan then change the parking lot configuration if needed.

Kevin Even, village engineer, said the new plan gives PLH the ability to restripe the lot and add parking spaces.

Both Even and Stockham said they would support the original parking plan if it worked better for the business model.

Representatives from PLH seemed satisfied with the revised parking plan.

Even said the facade improvement will fit in with the overall downtown redevelopment plan.

After the meeting, Paul Lynch of PLH & Associates told the Tribune that leases are currently being signed for the spaces, and the hope is to have one tenant open in March.

So far, a fast food establishment and hair salon have expressed interest, Lynch said. The building could accommodate storage spaces and offices, as well, Lynch added.

"We're taking a building that has been on the market for a long time and revitalizing it and making an improvement," Lynch said.

Lynch said the motto of the company is "Helping build better communities."

Lynch had appeared before the commission in September with plans to build at N. Century Avenue but backed out of that deal, he said.

Economically, Lynch said that location would be less feasible for tenants.

PLH & Associates originally was a home builder. Its commercial buildings are in Oregon, Lynch's home town, he told the Tribune.

"Three years ago, we decided to get out of residential and focus on commercial. We saw a need in our community to focus on the commercial sector," Lynch said.

According to the company's Web site, PLH & Associates owns the Janesville Street Commons property in Oregon. Lynch also redeveloped a former business into a health care facility.

The company has plans to open a Holiday Inn - Express in Oregon in 2009, as well.

Lynch was named the 2008 Outstanding Business Person of the Year by the Oregon Chamber of Commerce.

Parking also issue for EMS building

The plan commission also approved a site plan for the expanded EMS building but cited lack of parking as an issue there, too.

Janine Glaeser of the construction firm, Bray & Associates, presented a plan that shows two to three on-site parking spaces in the construction plan.

The EMS is purchasing property to the west of its current building at Reeve and Klein Drive for the expansion.

Waunakee's parking ordinance requires 30 sites for the square footage, but Glaeser said the building proposal uses some of the existing site for green space.

Glaeser added that usually, between four to six people are in the building during a shift. The training room is used once per month, normally in the evening, she said. EMS has an agreement with a neighboring property owner to use 10 stalls, and the police chief has offered 15 of the department's stalls, Glaeser said.

Glaeser had approached the Post Office for shared parking but learned that because it is federal property, there could be no such agreement, she said. She added that at night, when the Post Office is closed, the lot could be used.

Plan commissioners expressed concern about the appearance of holding village-owned properties to a more lenient standard than it does for private developers.

"I'm concerned with the parking," Even said. "We don't want to put in more impervious parking lots than we need to, and at the same time, we don't want to plug up Reeve Drive and Klein Drive with cars."

Gary Herzberg, plan commissioner and village board member, asked how a shared parking agreement with the neighboring property owner would impact any future sales of the business.

Even said the property owner would enter an agreement that would remain with the property at the time of sale.

Plan commissioners approved the site plan subject to expansion of the parking lot if needed.

Also at Monday's meeting, the commission:

- held a conceptual review of an amendment to the Hanover Condos development plan. Developer Don Tierney is amending the plan to include single family condominiums, rather than multi-family, in the development. Although the homes would stand alone, they would be part of the condo association.
- approved a certified survey map at Schwoegler Drive in the Town of Vienna.
- approved a Hwy. 19/113 access study provided by the Department of Transportation (see related story).
- approved updated stormwater ordinances as provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The village must adopt the changes in order to continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance program.

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