

VILLAGE OF LIBERTYVILLE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Committee of the Whole

Joint Workshop with the Plan Commission,  
Economic Development Commission, and  
Appearance Review Commission

February 14, 2023

President Johnson called to order the Committee of the Whole at 6:30 p.m. Those present were: President Donna Johnson, Trustees Scott Adams, Peter Garrity, Matthew Hickey, Matthew Krummick, Dan Love, and Jim Connell. Also in attendance were Ashley Engelmann, Deputy Village Administrator, Director of Community Development John Spoden, Economic Development Manager Heather Rowe, and David Smith, Senior Planner.

Rolls call were taken by the Chairs of the Plan Commission, Appearance Review Commission and Economic Development Commission.

**JOINT WORKSHOP WITH PLAN COMMISSION, APPEARANCE REVIEW  
COMMISSION, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION- PROPOSED 176  
MILWAUKEE AVENUE DEVELOPMENT**

Mayor Johnson stated that the purpose of the meeting was to review and discuss the proposal by Graham Enterprises to redevelop the parcels located at the southwest and southeast corners of Milwaukee Avenue and Route 176. She further noted that Graham Enterprises has sought potential users for the southeast corner of Milwaukee Avenue and Route 176 including Starbucks and CVS but that their efforts have not materialized.

Mr. John Spoden, Director of Community Development, stated that the purpose of the meeting was to return to a development technique that was often used in the past. He stated that it is an opportunity for a property owner or developer to present informal plans to the Village Boards and Commissions to get initial feedback before submitting a formal application for development. He stated that a formal application would be reviewed by the Appearance Review Commission and the Plan Commission who would then make their recommendation to the Village Board. Mr. Spoden stated that Mr. Matt Graham would provide a presentation of the proposed car wash on the southeast corner of Milwaukee Avenue and Route 176 and the proposed redevelopment of the gas station convenience store with a drive-through on the southwest corner of Milwaukee Avenue and Route 176. He stated that the Zoning Code currently does not contemplate a c-store drive-through or a stand-alone car wash in the C-2 Commercial District therefore the owner would have to apply for a Special Use Permit for a Planned Development.

Mr. Spoden stated that several decades ago the parcels were zoned B-2 and at that time car washes were not listed in the Zoning Code as a permitted principal use but were permitted as an accessory use to gas stations.

Mr. Chris Kalischefski, architect for Graham Enterprises, presented historical background regarding Graham Enterprises and described the growth of the company.

Mr. Brian Wente of Graham Enterprises described the TRIO brand. He stated that the TRIO brand represents the three components of the business (1) convenience store, (2) fueling service, and (3) car wash. The TRIO brand attempts to change the typical perception of gas stations. TRIO service stations are clean, modern, and provide a wide variety of food offerings in their convenience stores, including fresh fruit. TRIO convenience stores provide made-to-order food offerings as well. TRIO gas station freestanding signs place the TRIO brand logo at the top and the gas station signs with the fuel brand below the TRIO logo. TRIO is different from other gas station and c-store establishments; the TRIO branding is prominently displayed. The TRIO establishment which is in Northbrook is the only service station that is permitted to sell packaged liquor. Graham Enterprises has been a family-owned business for over 100 years.

Mr. Kalischefski presented the proposed development. He stated that the industry standard for this type of fueling c-store development typically requires 2.5 to 3 acres of land area. There is a TRIO facility under construction in Green Oaks on land area that is more than 3 acres. He stated that they developed a TRIO facility in Park Ridge and were given high compliments for that development. Mr. Kalischefski presented photos of TRIO facilities developed in Park Ridge, Northbrook, and Glen Ellyn. Mr. Kalischefski stated that the front facade design places a large emphasis on the c-store entrance with the TRIO branding and colors.

Mr. Kalischefski presented the proposal for the subject site located at the southeast and southwest corners of Milwaukee Avenue and Route 176. He reviewed the site's history which included the Citgo and Shell gas stations. He stated that the subject site land area at the southwest corner is approximately 46,000 square feet and the subject site land area at the southeast corner is approximately 48,000 square feet, after the acquisition of the neighboring parcels just west of the existing service station c-store. He stated that the Grahams first purchased the southwest corner in the 1980's when it was a Citgo station. Across the street at the southeast corner was once a Shell gas service station. The current size of the existing c-store is approximately 1,000 square feet.

Mr. Kalischefski stated that between the year 2000 and 2018 there have been multiple attempts to develop the southeast corner of Milwaukee Avenue and Route 176, but all have failed for a variety of reasons. He believes that the highest and best use for the southeast corner is their current proposal for the high-quality express style car wash. He stated that the two corners have been redesigned with improved vehicular access. The design of the proposed redevelopment of the c-store at the southwest corner will enhance product offerings to the customer. The store will have two fronts, each facing both Park Avenue (Route 176) and Milwaukee Avenue. The redesigned site plan shows that the gas pump

canopy will be pulled back further from Milwaukee Avenue. He stated that moving the canopy will have a one-million-dollar additional cost to the project. They are also including a drive through service with service window at the south facade of the c-store building.

Mr. Kalischefski stated that the proposed car wash site at the southeast corner has been designed with adequate stacking spaces for the vehicles queuing for the car wash. The parking and vacuum stations are located south of the proposed car wash structure. The development of both corners will provide a positive economic impact to the community especially with improved vehicular circulation in the site plan design. He stated that the c-store becomes a café in addition to the high-quality food product offerings. The economic impact is further enhanced by the architectural enhancements of both corners. He noted that the southeast corner car wash development provides a platform for further investment to the properties to the south as well as an important investment into the Libertyville community.

Mr. Kalischefski reported that the car wash proposal for the southeast corner includes re-routing of the bike path by pulling it up through the subject site to so that it will cross at the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue and Route 176.

Mr. Matt Graham, Graham Enterprises, introduced his family history including the beginning of Graham Enterprises and its relationship with the Libertyville community. He stated that Graham Enterprises is part of the Libertyville fabric. He noted that it is the intent of Graham Enterprises to retain and grow tax dollars. He reported that the proposed c-store redevelopment and the development of the car wash will utilize state-of-the-art upgrades and that the development will be a launch pad for future investment into the properties to the south along Milwaukee Avenue.

Trustee Adams stated that he visited other TRIO c-store and gas stations in other communities. He reported that no development proposals have come forward regarding the southeast corner so the TRIO car wash makes the most sense.

Trustee Garrity stated that the proposed car wash did not initially resonant with him. He noted that he supports the southwest corner c-store redevelopment proposal. He feels the car wash proposal is big and he prefers that the car wash proposal be scaled back. Trustee Garrity asked what stopped previous proposals for the southeast corner.

Mr. Graham stated that there is a graduated history for the southeast corner. He noted that additional adjacent parcels were added over time. There were conversations with banks, Starbucks, and others, etc., over time that did not come to fruition.

Mr. Kalischefski stated that prior development proposals have shown interest in the land area at the southeast corner that included the existing bike path and parcels south of the bike path which Graham Enterprises did not own. He stated that Lake County manages the bike path and have the first right of refusal. He noted that IDOT owns the bike path property and they have a mandate that if it were to be sold then either a tunnel under Milwaukee Avenue or a bridge over Milwaukee Avenue would be required to be installed.

He stated that this would be very expensive and not feasible. He further noted that they decided the TRIO car wash is the highest and best use for the southeast corner without incorporating the bike path property.

Trustee Adams stated that he would not be supportive of a text amendment, so the Planned Development is the better option.

Trustee Hickey stated that he likes the TRIO branding, but the C-2 Downtown Community Commercial District is a transitional commercial district where car washes are not listed as permitted or special permitted uses. He feels that the proposal for both the southwest and southeast corners are two distinctly separate projects. He stated that the car wash proposal for the southeast corner is too much to ask for, but the c-store redevelopment is a good proposal.

Trustee Krummick noted that he appreciates having the pre-application meeting with the Committee of the Whole. He stated that the corners are near the Heritage Area and are a gateway into the downtown. He feels that the proposed TRIO architectural design is not commensurate with the Heritage Area architecture. He stated that he has concerns about the proximity of the drive-through to the residential area to the south regarding the speaker noise as well as the large mass of the car wash building.

Trustee Love stated that he appreciates the desire for increased tax revenue, but he feels the proposed design does not reflect the architecture of downtown Libertyville.

Mr. Graham stated that the proposed combined development of the TRIO c-store and the car wash will earn twice the tax revenue that the existing gas station and c-store currently earn.

Trustee Love stated that he has concerns about the traffic flow of the two corners.

Mr. Kalischefski stated that they had a traffic study done. He described the proposed right-in/right-out access points and the ensuing traffic patterns for the two corners. He stated that the proposal envisions a reduction of curb cuts from 5 to 3 at the southwest corner thus mitigating potential traffic movement conflicts. He stated that because the proposed developments are not full-blown destination land uses it will also help to mitigate traffic flow.

Trustee Connell stated that the subject land areas should be larger to accommodate the proposals. He feels that the architectural design of the proposal is a mismatch with the architecture of the downtown.

Plan Commission Chair Steffe asked why the gas pump canopy is proposed to be shifted. Mr. Kalischefski stated that it is currently too close to the roadway and doesn't allow enough space for landscaping.

Chair Steffe asked if Graham Enterprises would consider selling the southeast corner if it would attract additional users. Mr. Graham stated that they prefer a ground lease arrangement.

Chair Steffe stated that it does not appear that all opportunities have been explored for the southeast corner.

Plan Commissioner Oakley stated that they should consider reducing the size of the signage.

Economic Development Commissioner Marks stated that he is tired of the southeast corner being an empty lot and that he likes the TRIO proposal for both corners.

Economic Development Commissioner Grano stated that he likes the tax generation opportunity. He noted that these corners are the gateway to South Milwaukee Avenue. He stated that he supports the project.

Economic Development Commission Chair Cortesi stated that the southeast corner has been vacant for over 20 years. He supports the proposal.

Plan Commissioner Wheeler stated that he supports the proposal for the southwest corner. He asked if the plan would cause traffic conflicts between vehicles and bicycles. Mr. Kalischefski stated that the proposed right-in/right-out curb cuts with strategically placed stop bars on the pavement and stop signs to control traffic movement for both bikes and cars would help to mitigate traffic movement conflicts.

Trustee Adams stated that both corners have traditionally been gas stations. He noted that the Heritage Area is bounded by the Metra tracks on the north and Maple Avenue on the south. He does not believe the Heritage Area reaches all the way down to the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue and Route 176.

Due to time constraints Mayor Johnson reported that the Committee of the Whole needed to be adjourned to begin the Village Board meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole, the Mayor asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Adams moved to adjourn the Committee of the Whole, and Trustee Connell seconded. The motion carried on a unanimous voice vote at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Engelmann  
Deputy Village Administrator