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Jersey Township Trustees considering rezoning that would pave way for 5 warehouses



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Jersey Township has watched thousands of acres annex into New Albany for development, but the township could now be getting businesses of its own.

A rezoning petition is before the Jersey Township Trustees that would pave the way for five warehouses at the intersection of Worthington Road and Putnam Road SW on 10 parcels that are currently farmland and zoned neighborhood business and rural residential.

The petition has already gone through the township's zoning commission, which recommend approval with conditions regarding water and sewer. The trustees held a public hearing on the matter Jan. 10 and that will continue at the next regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 6, when they could possibly vote on the matter as well.



A rezoning petition is before the Jersey Township Trustees that would pave the way for five warehouses to be built on current farmland at the intersection of Worthington Road and Putnam Road SW. *Maria DeVito/The Advocate*

Township Trustee Dan Wetzel and Administrator Rob Platte said in an interview that any time land stays in the township it is a positive.

"That's been the trustees' goal here and the reason why they've been so proactive and putting these things in place to try to stop that annexation," Platte said.

While the land is within the boundaries of the Worthington Road Corridor Overlay District that narrowly passed in November, the property won't be using the commercial professional office zoning that is designated in that area. Property owners are not required to use the zoning options within the overlay district.

Instead, LeVeck Commercial Construction and Development is seeking to have the area rezoned as a planned unit development, which Platte said allows the developer and township to devise a detailed plan for the types of uses permitted, design standards, setback

requirements, maximum height and other details, including even the orientation of buildings.

"You'll notice in this one that the buildings are oriented in such a way that any truck traffic that goes in or out of there that's backing up to dock doors ... won't be shining lights onto neighboring properties and things like that," Platte said. "There's really a better opportunity for the trustees to tailor what the development actually is when you do something like this."



A rezoning petition is before the Jersey Township Trustees to rezone 10 parcels near the intersection of Worthington Road and Putnam Road SW from neighborhood business and rural residential to a planned unit development, which would pave the way for five warehouses on the site. *Photo Provided By ADR & Associates*

He said the proposed development is not a significant variance from what would be allowed using the overlay zoning, but that the developer opted to pursue a PUD.

The PUD, Platte said, will use design standards similar to those included in the overlay district so that if other developments go in, they will match.

"I think from the township's perspective, it's complimentary. I think the overlay was put in place as the initial step to help the township protect its boundaries, what it had left and had not annex," Platte said. "We certainly anticipate specific developments wanting to come in and maybe do something a little bit and tweak the overlay."

Wetzel said with the way the PUD text is written, the development has more restrictions in place than if the overlay district zoning was utilized.

Building specifics

According to the proposal from the developer, the plans call for five warehouse structures on about 71 acres just south of Ohio 161. All five buildings combined will total more than 1 million square feet, according to the plans.

The project is a speculative development, with no known tenants at this time, Platte said.

The intention is to build the second building first, leaving open the land closest to Worthington Road in case the developer decides commercial retail, such as a restaurant or shops, would be a better use, Platte said, adding that would require amending the PUD.

The site's development plan states the permitted use, which include manufacturing of electronics, home goods and appliances, Platte said.

"At these buildings' sizes, we were anticipating electronics-type (manufacturing) not necessarily data centers, but very much could be support businesses for Intel. We definitely could see some of those going in there as well," he said.



Plans show where five warehouses would be situated at the intersection of of Worthington Road and Putnam Road SW in Jersey Township. *Photo Provided By ADR & Associates*

Wetzel said the township doesn't anticipate the site will generate a huge increase in truck traffic at least at the beginning. The developer will be limited to a certain number of employees that can be on site because it will use a septic system to start.

Eventually, utilities will be provided by the Southwest Licking Community Water and Sewer District. The development will be required to hook up to public water once SWLCWSD brings a 16-inch water line down Worthington Road later this year. Platte said the water and sewer district has informed the township it has awarded the contract for that project, and they expect construction to start in the spring and be completed by the fall.

The timeline for sewer is longer, and Platte said it's expect SWLCWSD will have sewer lines in the area by 2025.

Platte, who was recently approved as a consultant for the utility district, said the township doesn't intend to approve all five buildings using a septic system. As a result, only one or two of the structures will be built before the sewer lines are in place.

There are residential homes to the east of the site along Putnam Road as well as the Cole Estates subdivision to the west. Originally, the developer proposed having emergency access from Glenn Drive SW within the subdivision, but the township worked with them to switch it to Putnam Road instead. The main entrance to the site will be from Worthington Road.

While the emergency access will only be used if the main entrance is blocked, Platte said the township did not want to invite access through the small residential neighborhood.

To further protect residents, the plans call for mounding with trees and shrubs all around the site and lighting can not spill outside of the development property lines. Platte said they also increased the setbacks to ensure the highest points of the development are blocked by the mounding.

Jersey Township does not have a joint economic development district, or JEDD, set up yet, but is in the process of setting one up, Platte said. JEDDs are an economic development tool that allows townships to collect income tax on commercial properties within a defined area.

Platte said the Worthington Road development would be included in an eventual JEDD.

"The township is requiring commercial and light industrial development in the township to participate in the JEDD," he said.

Next steps

The trustees can proceed a few different ways during Monday's meeting. They can continue the hearing if they feel they need more information, but Platte said he expects they will have all outstanding items addressed.

They can close the hearing and vote on the rezoning that evening or they could wait. By law, Platte said the trustees have 20 days to vote on the matter, and they would need to schedule a special meeting to do so.

If the rezoning is approved, whether it's done at the Feb. 6 meeting or another time, the rezoning would go into effect 30 days later.

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