



Bryon S. Houlgrave/Enterprise Staff

Waukesha County Supervisor Bonnie Morris and her husband, George, of Dousman, read over literature from Tuesday's public meeting at Olympia Resort & Conference Center regarding the latest development details about the Pabst Farms Town Centre. Morris represents the Oconomowoc area.

Pabst Farms mall stores questioned

More than 200 show up to hear city, developer's explanations

By **JEFF RUMAGE**
Enterprise Staff

A conference room at the Olympia Resort & Conference Center had to be modified Tuesday to accommodate the more than 200 people that attended a public meeting about the proposed Pabst Farms Town Centre, the majority of them seeking answers about delays and changes to the planned regional mall.

The roughly 90-minute public comment session featured residents and city officials arguing recent changes to Pabst Farms Town Centre reflect a plan that doesn't match past promises by developers.

"There are a lot of things we have heard over the years from Pabst Farms that have changed - a lot," said Richard Wentland, an

Oconomowoc resident

Former Oconomowoc Mayor Floss Whalen said the project does not live up to the promises made when the city established a \$24 million tax incremental finance district in 2001 to support the development. She urged the city and developers to wait for a more stable economic climate, because the TIF district is still healthy.

"The city can afford to wait," she said. "I assume the developer cannot."

Developers Diversified Realty is heading up Pabst Farms Town Centre, and the company has only submitted a few of the many requirements needed to gain final approval for the project. After the project passed the third phase of the planning process, the city passed an ordinance holding the developers to meeting certain con-

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What do you think about plans for commonplace stores at the Pabst Farms Town Centre? Send your letters to the editor to the Enterprise, P.O. Box B, Oconomowoc, WI 53066, drop them off at 212 E. Wisconsin Ave., or send an e-mail to kpas-son@conley.net.

ditions before it could be approved.

Bob Duffy, director of the Oconomowoc Bureau of Economic Development, said the developers have so far failed to live up to some of their past promises, such as their desire to open concurrently retail and supporting uses.

"There is a lot of information that needs to be provided," Duffy said. "They're going to have to

assemble that for us so we can bring ourselves together and make the next move."

Duffy said the city has high expectations for the project, as developers handed out promotional materials advertising a "premier retail center" and "regional destination for consumers." But Duffy said the city came across a marketing map indicating a roughly 2,000-square-foot strip retail center occupied by common tenants.

He said there is no evidence the project distinguishes itself from retail projects in Delafield and Johnson Creek.

"If customers are not drawn from southeastern Wisconsin, will the city be left with a local strip retail mall," he asked the assembled crowd.

See MALL, BACK PAGE

Mall

From Page A1

Ken Herro, of Oconomowoc Realty and a former Waukesha County Board supervisor, agreed, saying the project has shifted its focus dramatically since it was first introduced. He urged the city to ratchet up its standards.

"I don't believe the city should drop our expectations to what we saw tonight," he said.

DDR development director Bob Elias said the small, unique retailers in the pedestrian-oriented lifestyle center are waiting for big, anchor tenants to move in before they sign on. Elias said some of their other mall projects feature community centers anchored by Target, Hobby Lobby and TJ Maxx.

"The Targets of the world are major tenants that help lure people to the lifestyle center," Elias said.

But Elias also admits the lifestyle center may not come as soon as promised, and city officials say developers have yet to pin down a completion date.

"How do we know when the

WHAT THEY SAID

"My motivation for serving the city of Oconomowoc, as well as living here, is that I love the city. I love her, and I consider her to be like a daughter. And I see these slick guys coming in from out of town, and they want to sleep with my daughter."

— Craig Pruscha, member, Oconomowoc Community Development Authority

"I think it's quite obvious that Developers Diversified Realty think that they are offering this community the kind of shopping center it should have. But, I think it is equally obvious that the scenario they've presented this evening is nowhere near the regional shopping center that the city thought it was ensuring when it established a \$24 million TIF on the Pabst Farms."

— Floss Whalen, former Oconomowoc mayor

"There seems to be some thinking that they (Developers Diversified Realty) are going to pull a fast one, they're going to get these few big buildings up, head back to Ohio and say, 'Goodbye, Oconomowoc. We did what we wanted to do.' And that's really far from the truth."

— Jerry Hitchler, Oconomowoc resident

lifestyle center is going to go up after we build this big-box community?" said Bryan Knott, an Oconomowoc resident

DDR architect C.J. Lindberg responded to questions about the project's unique appeal by saying the Town Centre will be more intimate and easier to walk than Johnson Creek or Delafield.

Lindberg said the project's former water feature has been replaced by Town Centre

Green, a plaza with a fire pit, water fountain and a lawn for community events.

"Our idea is to create a cityscape, a lifestyle street-scape that allows you to walk, to sit, to gather," he said.

Elias said Town Centre Green is 80 percent bigger than the common area at Bayshore Town Center in Glendale.

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