

# THE EASTON NEWS

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## Traffic problems predicted for Forks grocery

By: Jan Schott

The Forks Township Board of Supervisors decided to delay voting on whether a proposed Weis grocery store and gas station would meet the criteria for a conditional use in the employment center (EC) district under township ordinances until their regular meeting Feb. 15, after hearing alarming projections about traffic during a hearing Tuesday night.

Traffic expert Frank Tavani, owner of F. Tavani and Associates Inc., testified under questioning from Gary Asteak, attorney for Residents Who Care, a civic organization which has voiced concerns about the proposal, that a 100,000 square foot grocery store would generate 100 times the traffic on weekends than an office building or a hotel, which are regular accepted uses in the EC district.

Using accepted traffic study projections, Tavani said a large grocery store would generate 10,000 trips on a Saturday or a Sunday, while an office would generate only 184 trips and a hotel would see 1,600 car trips. "There would be 10,000 percent more traffic (for a large supermarket) than the other uses that the ordinance provides for by right," he said.

Tavani noted that the developers planned to mitigate traffic congestion by adding a traffic light at Sullivan Trail and Braden Boulevard and adding a left hand turning lane on Uhler Road as it approaches Sullivan Trail. But the length of the stacking lane, 475 feet, will not be enough to accommodate all the cars, and other drivers will not be able to get to the stacking lane because a line of traffic will be blocking it, he said. Drivers should expect an average three-minute waiting time to get through the intersection, he said.

Asteak asked Tavani if the developer had created a "safe and efficient" traffic plan "that will minimize hazards and congestion" which the ordinance requires.

"In my opinion, no," responded Tavani. "Certainly by-right and conditional uses would generate far less traffic. Also a 20,000-square-foot supermarket would generate less traffic."

Tavani explained that proposals are given grades by traffic engineers from A to F on how safe and efficient the traffic is projected to be. The intersection of Uhler Road and Sullivan Trail would have a failing grade of F if the Weis Market is built as planned, he said.

Asteak questioned Tavani about the gas station that is also proposed for the site and whether it would add to the traffic congestion. The traffic expert responded that gas stations don't usually attract extra trip traffic because people usually stop for gas when they're already out driving and don't make a separate trip just to buy gas.

After Tavani completed his testimony, Asteak introduced an updated Bushkill Creek Stormwater Management Plan that he said has been approved by DEP and which the township will have to adopt soon. He noted that the new regulations will be in affect by the time the developer starts moving dirt, and he asked Township Engineer Fred Hay if he was familiar with the new regulations.


Hay responded that he hadn't had time to review them, but that they concerned the quality of run-off water and not the quantity. Asteak said he investigated the storm water run-off question after a resident at the last hearing voiced concern about flooding and roads becoming impassable during rainstorms.

Scott Gingold, spokesman for Residents Who Care, said, "The real crux of this proposal will be that the traffic will be 100 times or 10,000 percent worse than what it is now. It's a country lane, and it can't handle what we have now. This disturbs me-why does it have to be a big box grocery story or a CVS? Why not an office or a hotel?"

"None of us can forget the tragedies of roadways and houses being flooded," he said. "We should take every step possible to prevent this in the future. This is an application for a conditional use. We can make the applicant stand on his head. I'm also amazed there was no consultation with the FAA on this project with its proximity to the airport. What if there was an accident and a plane hit that grocery store?"

Resident Marie Dowd added, "I think of the board of supervisors as the visionaries of township growth. You're supposed to come up

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1959 or before	Wilson High (985)
1960-69	Jefferson High (1054)
1970-79	Commerce High (396)
1980-89	Springfield High (514)
1990-99	
2000-present	

▲ START

with a plan for putting parameters on growth to make the township a great place to live. Nobody else should call the shots."