



## THE EXPRESS-TIMES

### Grocery gripes continue in Forks

Official testifies that new Weis Market may actually improve traffic on Sullivan Trail.

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By **COURTNEY LOMAX**  
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FORKS TWP. | Traffic was the topic of discussion at a zoning hearing Monday during which residents challenged the board of supervisors decision to allow a grocery store in a place it was previously not permitted.

An attorney representing the township also questioned a witness who said the township followed the correct procedures when approving the addition of the grocery store.

Weis Market Forks Inc. received preliminary approval from supervisors earlier this month to build an approximately 60,000-square-foot grocery and gas station on an 8.9-acre tract in the employment center district at Sullivan Trail and Uhler Road.

But that decision might be moot if the group of residents wins its challenge with the zoning hearing board. The residents oppose the zoning change, saying it's spot zoning that was designed with only one developer in mind. The residents also say supervisors didn't consider how traffic would be impacted by the grocery store.

Supervisors agreed in July to allow the supermarket in the district as a conditional use.

The project's traffic specialist told the zoning board the already-congested intersection will be less congested if the grocery store moves in.

Robert Hoffman, a project manager with Traffic Planning and Design Inc., said the developer plans road improvements including widening Sullivan Trail and adding left-turn lanes in both directions. Those improvements will make driving at the intersection less treacherous, Hoffman said.

Zoning hearing board member Louis Moyer questioned how the wait time at the intersection can be reduced if traffic is going to be added to the road.

Adding a grocery store in the northern portion of the township will alleviate traffic on the southern portion of Sullivan Trail because people won't be forced to shop at the Giant grocery store, said Charlie Schmehl, an expert in land planning, design and zoning. But he admitted traffic in the township is not improving.

"This township has serious traffic problems and they are going to get much, much worse," Schmehl said.

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