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Weis Market a step closer to approval in Forks Twp.

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By **COURTNEY LOMAX**
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FORKS TWP. | If supervisors approve it Thursday, township residents may soon be able to shop at a Weis Market at Uhler Road and Sullivan Trail.

The township zoning board Monday denied the appeal of a citizens group that claims township supervisors acted unconstitutionally when they agreed to allow a grocery store at the intersection.

Zoners voted 4-1 in favor of the denial with board member Ronald Asteak voting against the motion. Louis Moyer, Pete Rossi, Robert Egolf and John Pappas voted in favor of it.

"We are not surprised by the outcome," said Scott Gingold, one of the appellants in the case. "We will appeal it."

Supervisors in February voted 3-2 to grant Weis Market Forks Inc. preliminary conditional approval to build an approximately 60,000-square-foot grocery and gas station on an 8.9-acre tract in the employment center district at the intersection.

The citizens group known as Residents Who Care is also appealing the supervisors' decision to grant preliminary approval for the project.

The group's case claimed the supervisors' July decision to allow the grocery store is spot zoning and said supervisors did not consider the traffic impact when they agreed to allow a grocery store at the already busy intersection.

Based on a survey conducted by Residents Who Care, 59 percent of residents polled said they were not in favor of the grocery store because it would increase traffic, the group's attorney Gary Asteak said in his closing argument.

"We all know what the impact of this will be," Gary Asteak said. "The board of supervisors dropped the ball."

Zoner Ronald Asteak is Gary Asteak's brother. Attorneys and zoning members agreed at the beginning of the hearings the two being brothers was not an issue.

Township Attorney Steven Goudsouzian said the grocery store was added to a list of uses that already existed in the employment center district. He said it is appropriate because roads can handle it and it promotes competition with Giant.

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