

# When “That will never happen to me” happens.

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## Trustees need more detail to OK license for wine bar

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Flossmoor trustees in September were favorable to granting a liquor license to a proposed wine bar in Flossmoor Commons but still had questions that needed to be answered. Instead of answers, they found themselves with more questions this month after the petitioner requested a second license to offer retail sales from the same location.

Ronakkumar Patel, owner of Family Wines & Liquors in Homewood, appeared before the Flossmoor Village Board again Monday, Dec. 6, seeking a license that would allow him to sell packaged wine, beer and liquor at the establishment, following his prior request for a license to serve wine with the possibility of some wine bottle sales discussed.

On Dec. 6, Trustee James Mitros criticized the fact that the village had very little in writing from Patel regarding the proposal, mostly phone calls and appearances asking for different things. And those things keep changing, according to Mitros.

“It’s not anywhere close to what we initially [discussed],” Mitros said. “It keeps evolving into something bigger and bigger.”

Trustee George Lofton said Patel’s original floor plan did not include retail, so he asked how that layout might change with the updated plan. Patel said it would not, because the retail items would be kept behind the bar to sell to customers who have tried something they like. But he also suggested retail packages of beer and bottles of bourbon, which left trustees questioning where it would all be kept.

Patel originally appeared with a request for a liquor license on July 19. He also ex-

pressed interest in having video gaming at the facility. He has insisted the business will not look like a liquor store but a wine bar, with select items available to sell. He previously discussed food that would be brought in to serve at the bar. Patel added Dec. 6 that the business would use a machine to pour some wine and bourbon, allowing customers to self-serve from the device.

Trustee Gary Daggett said the way he understands the project, it would not have the appearance of a traditional liquor store, despite the retail sales.

“But it is a liquor store where it has a [bar] and gambling,” Mitros said, directing his comments to Patel. “It may not look like it, but that’s what I’m struggling with here. ... You’re confusing me.”

“I’m confused, and I don’t want to approve something I’m confused about.”

Trustee Rosalind Mustafa told Patel that trustees are not opposed to his proposal but need to see an entire plan that has each piece of the project.

“It’s like a puzzle where pieces are broken,” Mustafa added.

Trustee Brian Driscoll said Flossmoor wants to make sure what they are approving is an “added value” for the village and not simply a gaming parlor.

“You’ve got some good ideas. ... I think we’d like to see your vision a little bit more,” he said.

Mitros said Patel needs to invest in an architect or designer to draw up a full plan.

“Your concept of a wine bar is not what my concept is,” Mitros said. “We don’t have to debate it. You have to show us so we know what your concept is.”

“You’ve never done it. ... I’ll approve it. Give me what I’m asking for.”

## Ceremony kicks off start of Hartford construction project

**BY NICK ULANOWSKI**  
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In a ceremonial groundbreaking Thursday, Dec. 16, officials set in motion the development of the Hartford Building at the corner of Ridge Road and Martin Avenue in Homewood.

The four-story building will include a Stoney Point Grill Restaurant on the first floor and three floors of apartments.

“After a great effort by both the village, the public at-large and the developers I represent, we have now begun the process of breaking ground on a four-story, multi-use building,” said Tim Flanagan representing developer HFC Homewood.

Mayor Rich Hofeld described the event

as a “a day long in coming. I’d like to thank everyone that’s involved in the project — our entire staff and of course Tim Flanagan and his crew.”

In Flanagan’s comments, he echoed the sentiment that this day had finally arrived, and he thanked everyone for coming. He anticipated that “as the building gets erected, the excitement will start.”

Flanagan predicted “construction should be completed late in the fall.” He said once the outside structure is built, the fencing around the now vacant lot in downtown Homewood will come down.

“I’m excited. We’re excited,” said Napoleon Haney, Homewood village manager. “This is a game changer for our downtown.”