

Flossmoor petitioners for, against above-ground pools

BY BILL JONES
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A proposal made to the Flossmoor Village Board to allow above ground pools met with some concerns from residents and elected officials.

Jenny Curtis, the Flossmoor resident who brought a petition to the board March 7, said she now has 134 signatures in support of the pools. Curtis reiterated what they see as the benefits of changing village code to allow for above-ground pools: no tax increases for the owners of above-ground pools; cost efficiency; increased safety of pools higher off the ground; avoidance of crowds in public spaces; increased physical activity; and an outlet for improved mental health.

At the March 21 meeting, Rebecca Strupeck, of Flossmoor, told the board that she thinks allowing more pools in the community could lead to a “negative outcome.” She shared what she called “disturbing information about pool safety” with the village board along with 80 signatures of residents opposing changing the village code.

Strupeck also read comments about the aesthetics, village responsibility issues, flooding concerns on neighboring properties and noise.

Village Manager Bridget Wachtel reported above-ground pools have been prohibited in Flossmoor since at least 1981. Ballantrae and Madison Meadows homeowners associations also prohibit them, and those covenants would stand regardless of any changes to Flossmoor code.

She noted the village has received more requests to consider changing that ordinance since pandemic shutdowns went into effect in March 2020.

Wachtel said the board could modify its building code from 18-inch to 24-inch pool height, which would allow for kiddie pools and lounge-like pools; permit temporary pools; permit above-ground pools with decking, facade or landscaping the board and community feel are appropriate; permit above-ground pools as a special use, as the board currently does with in-ground pools; place an advisory referendum on a future ballot to gauge wider public opinion; or leave the regulations as is.

Mayor Michelle Nelson said allowing above-ground pools would be a “significant change,” noting that Flossmoor tends to favor open spaces, but more fencing would be required if the code changes. She asked if board members were interested in changing the ordinance, to consider safety and aesthetics to minimize the impact it would have on neighbors. She added that she has talked to people both for and against it.

Trustee Gary Daggett said he would be in favor of trustees seeing if it is possible to solve for the issues people have with above-ground pools to see if the board could approve them in a manner that would have the “least impact” on the village.

Wachtel told the board that staff can work on drafting a new ordinance for a future meeting. Her report notes Flossmoor appears to be “in the minority” when it comes to its above-ground pool restrictions.

Homewood awaits plans for downtown lot development

BY ERIC CRUMP
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A vacant lot that once was the location of the Savoia T’Go restaurant is being eyed for redevelopment, and on March 8 the village board of trustees approved a letter of intent with a prospective developer.

The letter provides Townes Glaser with 90 days to perform due diligence and negotiate an agreement to purchase the property and an agreement for incentives. The property is within the village’s downtown tax increment financing (TIF) district.

The village purchased the property at 18138 Dixie Highway in 2015 and demolished the former restaurant building in 2016. Since then, the property has served as a parking lot.

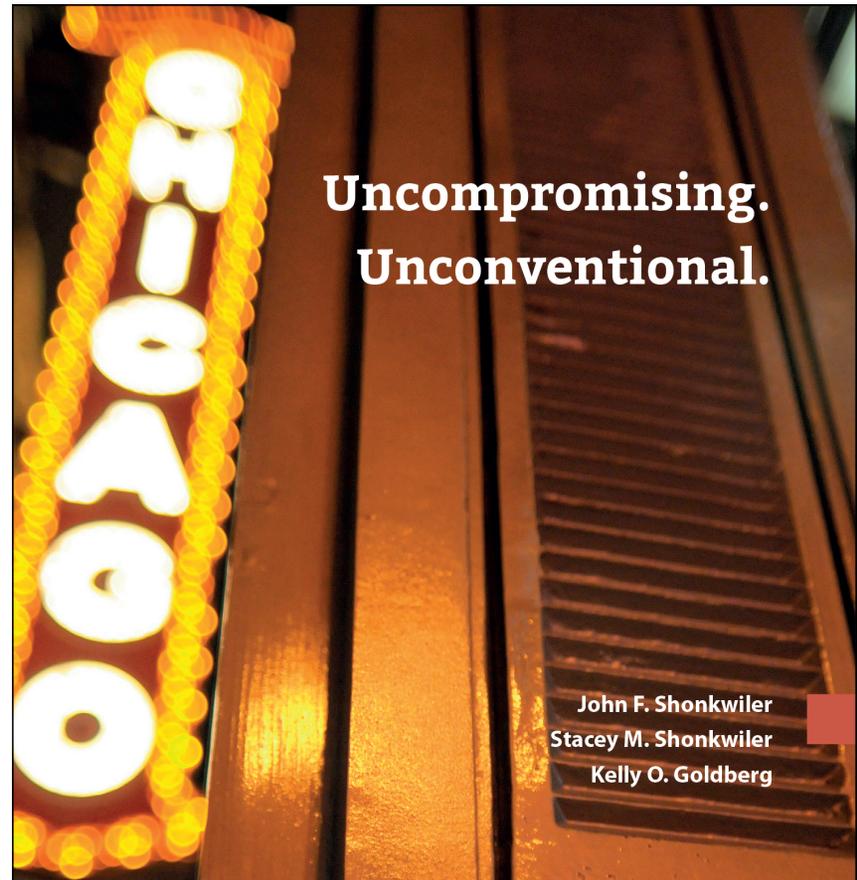
The letter grants the firm access to the

property to conduct soil borings and environmental testing.

Townes Glaser intends to submit plans for a mixed-use building with a retail or restaurant establishment on the first floor and residential units above, which would fit the village’s transit-oriented downtown development strategy.

The development could be similar to the Hartford Building, which is under construction at the southwest corner of Ridge Road and Martin Avenue. That building will include a restaurant on the first floor and three floors of apartments above it.

Village Economic Development Director Angela Mesaros said a small parcel adjacent to the development could be an element of the new development in some fashion. It could remain a park, or it could be an outdoor area associated with the first floor business.



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