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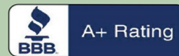
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Homewood approves incentives for Burlington store on Halsted

BY ERIC CRUMP

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Homewood trustees on April 12 approved an incentive package that would enable Burlington to develop a department store at 17825 Halsted Street. The space formerly was home to Office Max, which closed late in 2020.

The village agreed to rebate sales tax revenues collected from Burlington over a four-year period, estimated to be approximately \$200,000, and gave support for a Cook County Class 8 property tax reduction.

To make the project viable, the board also agreed to support Class 8 designations for three adjacent properties: Smoothie King at 17715 Halsted; a vacant storefront at 17729 Halsted; and the storefront occupied by UChicago Medicine at 17805 Halsted.

The properties are owned by DIKA Homewood LLC.

Homewood Economic Development Director Angela Mesaros said all the properties qualify for Class 8 benefits.

Class 8 is a Cook County program intended to encourage development in areas plagued by economic stagnation. The designation is available to industrial or commercial developments in Bloom, Bremen, Calumet, Rich and Thornton townships.

With the designation a property is as-

essed at 10% of market value for 10 years, 15% for the 11th year and 20% for the 12th year. It can be renewed in the 10th year or later.

The Homewood Appearance Commission voted down the company's request for a variance for a larger sign on the front facade of the Burlington store. The company said it needed greater visibility on Halsted Street.

The board also voted to approve a Class 8 recommendation for the Chik-fil-A restaurant at 17450 Halsted Street, but not without dissent.

When the site at 175th and Halsted Streets was redeveloped, GMX Real Estate Group did not request a Class 8 designation.

Trustee Jay Heiferman voted against the recommendation, citing his belief that the restaurant does not appear to need the tax reduction.

"If Chik-fil-A wanted to come in here and give a presentation about the hardship of being on the property, I would be glad to listen to it," he said.

Mayor Richard Hofeld countered Heiferman's point.

"I feel in the South Suburbs, Class 8 is the equalizer and this is something that should have been at the time that this was first brought into the village and it should be done now," he said.

D153 school board grants tenure to 16 new and seasoned teachers

BY CHRONICLE STAFF

The District 153 school board granted tenure to 16 teachers during its April 11 board meeting.

Tenure is granted after four years of successfully working in the district.

Newly tenured teachers are:

- Kathleen Schmidt, pre-kindergarten, Willow School.
- Darlene Gallagher, daily living skills, Churchill School.
- Rachel Hennigan, school psychologist, Churchill School.
- Alexandra Klupchak, reading specialist/interventionist, Churchill School.
- Katie Kvasnicka, English language, Churchill School.
- Imelda O'Connor, third grade, Churchill School.
- Julie Holly, music, James Hart School.
- Bria Hopkins, sixth grade, James Hart School.
- Lisa Norfleet, social worker, James Hart School.
- Noreen Rutledge, seventh grade, James Hart School.

The board also granted tenure to:

- Cally Will, resource teacher, Willow School.
- Amy Edwards, math specialist/interventionist, Churchill School.

They were granted tenure under a new rule that allows teachers who were already tenured in another school district, and who took positions in District 153 and were successfully evaluated as outstanding teachers over a two-year period.

The board also granted accelerated tenure to:

- Tanya Duplessis, social worker, Churchill School.
- Jillian Sosnowski, fifth grade, Churchill School.
- Melissa Campbell, sixth grade, James Hart School.
- Heather Hoefle, fifth grade band, James Hart and Churchill Schools.

They were granted accelerated tenure after three years in the district for their outstanding work.

In addition, the school board is expected to grant accelerated tenure to Bridget McCullough, school psychologist at Willow School, at its May meeting.