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## Homewood moves forward to redevelop village parking lot

BY ERIC CRUMP  
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The Homewood Board of Trustees agreed to negotiate the sale of a parcel of land in the downtown area for redevelopment.

At the board's meeting Tuesday, June 14, Village Manager Napoleon Haney reported that no alternate bids were received for the redevelopment of a portion of the village hall parking lot at 2024 Chestnut Road. The village had a proposal from HCF Homewood. The company has expressed interest in the site with the intention of building a five-story, 59-unit residential building on the site.

HCF Homewood currently is building the Hartford Building at Ridge Road and Martin Avenue in downtown Homewood. The building will have three floors of apartments over a first-floor restaurant and parking garage.

The specifics of the village parking lot development are not yet available.

When the proposal was first made public, Mayor Richard Hofeld said res-

idential building on the site would contribute to the village's goal of increasing population density in the downtown area, a move that is expected to bolster existing downtown businesses and create new business opportunities.

Hofeld cited a housing market survey the village had done in 2016 that estimated the demand for housing in the downtown area was not being met and that between 175 and 225 additional residential units would help meet the need.

During the May 24 board meeting, Homewood resident Dianne Noe questioned whether the village could afford to lose parking spots to a new development. She reported a recent visit to a downtown restaurant in the evening and parking spots along Ridge Road and Martin Avenue were all taken.

Hofeld said the village's recent acquisition of the commuter parking lot on Harwood Avenue would help balance out the loss of spaces at village hall. The Harwood lot can be used for public parking during evenings and weekends.

## PreK playground equipment in place at Flossmoor Hills

BY BILL JONES  
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As far as summer projects go in Flossmoor School District 161, Superintendent Dana Smith had some good news Monday, June 13, during a regular meeting of the board of education but also some complications to share.

"I feel like every little piece of good news may have a little bit of bitter on the back end of it," Smith told the board.

The good news: a preK playground at Flossmoor Hills has been installed. Smith thanked the Illinois State Board of Education for helping to secure funds for the playground, as well as staff who coordinated on the opportunity.

"It has been a long time coming, but it's open for use," Smith said. "Now we have another opportunity for our youngest learners at Flossmoor Hills to play on equipment that's their size, that's developmentally appropriate. We're moving forward there, and we're really excited."

But the district is holding off on other playground installations for now while awaiting supplies, he said.

"We want to make sure we see the actual materials before we start to dig

up anything on the campuses," Smith said. "With the supply chain issues that we've had, we think that's the safest way to move forward."

The district also started work on asphalt repairs that had been scheduled for June. But repairs have been put on hold because of a limestone quarry strike in Thornton, according to Smith.

"Since that provides the bedrock for the playgrounds and all those pieces, those projects have been put on hold," he said. "Hopefully that gets resolved here in the next week or two and those projects can continue."

### Other Business

- The school board voted 4-0 to approve its tentative fiscal year 2023 budget. It shows an estimated deficit of \$172,225, in line with prior discussions on the budget. Board members Carolyn Griggs, Misha Blackman and David Linnear were absent.
- The board also voted 4-0 to approve the hiring of an additional social worker for the 2022-2023 school year. The \$70,000 salary and benefits cost of the position is being paid out of a Community Partnership Grant, according to a board document.

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