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AVON

Planners give preliminary OK to retail center

By Rebecca Neal

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A proposed Avon shopping center on the former site of the Avon Recreation Center is one step closer to reality.

The Avon Plan Commission gave preliminary plat approval Monday for The Gables of Avon on U.S. 36. The development, which would occupy 26 acres at U.S. 36 and Gable Drive, is being developed by Allen Commercial Group of Greenwood. A new traffic light will be installed at the intersection of U.S. 36 and Gable Drive, serving as the main entrance to the shopping center, Bob Wildman, a lawyer representing the Allen Commercial Group, said at Monday's Plan Commission meeting.

Wildman said the developers did not want to make Gable Drive the main entrance because about 30 homes are on the street. However, the Indiana Department of Transportation wanted the light at Gable Drive to accommodate future development on the northside of U.S. 36, he said.

Gable Drive likely will be widened to handle traffic, he said.

The Gables of Avon would have a 150,000-square-foot strip shopping center west of Shiloh Creek and Avon Commons developments. Five out-lots, totaling 25,000 square feet along U.S. 36, likely would be used for restaurants and a bank.

Developers will tear down the Avon Recreation Center -- after its assets are auctioned Saturday -- and several industrial buildings on three other parcels of land, Wildman said.

The project is set for a spring groundbreaking with completion in the fall, but the developer will need to go before the Plan Commission for additional design approval before work can begin.

The development first went before town officials in 2002 but encountered criticism from residents of a small neighborhood off Gable Drive. The town and developer made several commitments on landscaping and lighting to protect the neighborhood, and Wildman said the developers will stand by those commitments.

Deloris Wuertley, a Gable Drive resident, said she was concerned that using Gable Drive as the main entrance will bring too much traffic into the neighborhood.

"On Gable Drive, we still have children riding bikes around the block," she said.

The Gables of Avon is the Allen Commercial Group's second retail project in Hendricks County. The company plans to break ground in late spring on Linden Square, a 51,000-square-foot retail and office center southwest of the intersection at 10th Street and Raceway Road.

Call Star reporter Rebecca Neal at (317) 444-2805.

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