

Senior living community proposed for West Dundee

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A site that has sat vacant in West Dundee for several years could soon be home to a senior living community.

The Illinois-based Bright Oaks Group Inc. has proposed two buildings on nine acres along the west side of Route 31, between Village Quarter Road and Market Loop.

One building would be geared toward assisted and memory care residents, and the other a four-story mixed-use that would include independent living and retail.

The Bright Oaks of West Dundee development would also feature a living area called The Bridge.

“That’s a unit where you may have a couple where one suffers from dementia and another doesn’t but they can live together in The Bridge,” said Dan Shapiro, attorney for Bright Oaks, at Monday’s Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

A planned restaurant in the development would be open to the public.

“The restaurant would be complementary to the building as well as visitors to the building, but also the community,” said West Dundee Village Manager Joseph Cavallaro who was in attendance at the meeting.

Bright Oaks officials are seeking a special use permit because senior housing is a special use for the B-3 zoned property.

Cavallaro said the project “is an exceptional fit for the immediate area.” He also lauded project officials for including the retail portion in the design plans.

“The retail component is something the village pushed for and there was a willingness to work with us on that,” he said. “We believe there’s a nice synergy that could be created with those retail uses. They could be complementary to the assisted facility, such as an eye clinic, a restaurant component or a physical therapist’s office. Those are going to be logical potential tenants for this.”

Bright Oaks officials said the development would create between 50 and 60 new jobs due to the staff needed to work there.

Laura Holtz, a property owner adjacent to the site, gave her thoughts on the project during Monday’s meeting.

“My dad was the original sub divider of that property and we have always had an interest in what becomes of this property and how it’s developed,” she said. “My family and I were thrilled when we found out a development like this was going in there. We feel like it’s a good use for the area there and the property.”

Holtz said she’d like to see the development include lots of green space. She also expressed concern about the proposed four-story building on the site.

“It doesn’t seem like it fits in very easily with the landscape because none of those buildings there are over two stories,” she said.

But Plan Commission member Rick Gilmore said he thinks “the four-story is part of the future of the village.”

"I think we will be seeing taller buildings there," he said. "I think it's going to be a very nice presence on [Route] 31."

Plan Commission member Robert Martin agreed.

"I think everybody was concerned about the four-story effect but I think it's part of life," he said. "We've got two and three story facilities right behind it now. I think it's an excellent plan for the site."

Cavallaro added it will be a tiered three and four story building at that corner.

"There are certain elements that are three story and certain elements that are four story," he said.

Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission were unanimous in recommending approval of the project, including its variances, to the Village Board.