

Meijer plans moving forward

By Clint Wolf cwolf@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Tuesday, October 7, 2014 4:00 pm

The Meijer grocery store and retail company is expected to close on property along Willowbrook Road in South Beloit in about 30 days, but an opening of the store is not expected until 2016.

Shannon Eldridge of Hendricks Commercial Properties presented an amended final plat to the South Beloit City Council Monday for the Ironworks At Willowbrook development, which includes the Meijer store as an anchor.

The project is planned for 15635 Willowbrook Road and is projected to include a dozen or more other business tenants in addition to Meijer.

Eldridge said Meijer's decision to close on the property is very good news.

"I don't think they would close without the intent of opening at some point," Eldridge said.

The only bad news was the project will not begin this year as developers had hoped.

"We were hopeful that construction would begin this year, but that is not going to happen," Eldridge said. "We now are looking at 2016 for an opening."

South Beloit Mayor Alice Schoonover said the project will bring shopping opportunities and jobs to the city.

"We will be looking forward to the day when we have a groundbreaking for this project," she said.

Initial plans for the Meijer store called for a 192,000-square-foot store with a garden center and drive-through window for the pharmacy on an 18-acre site on Willowbrook Road south of Route 75. There also would be a gas station on the Meijer lot in the development. The store is estimated to employ about 250 full-time and part-time people.

Eldridge said there has been good news from other retail businesses interested in the development. Bergner's, Marcus Theatres and Famous Footwear have expressed interest in the development.

Meijer has started work on store locations in Rockford and Machesney Park.

Meijer, based in Grand Rapids, Mich., operates 205 supercenters and grocery stores in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky.