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Plans for surgery center in Gateway Business Park to be resubmitted to city

By AUSTIN MONTGOMERY Staff Writer
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OrthoIllinois plans to build a surgery center in the Gateway Business Park in Beloit.

Artists renderings provided

BELOIT — OrthoIllinois could move forward with its plan to build a surgery center in the Gateway Business Park even after the company withdrew its original application for a conditional use permit.

On Nov. 18, the Beloit Plan Commission voted 3-3 regarding the conditional use permit for OrthoIllinois and that led to the company pulling its request. At the hearing, attorneys for both the Beloit Health System and OrthoIllinois made



arguments regarding the project with OrthoIllinois attorneys supporting it and Beloit Health System opposing it.

OrthoIllinois then submitted a letter on Nov. 25 to the city claiming the facility would be designated under a new use, stating that the city's zoning officer misinterpreted the original ruling that was the basis for the conditional use permit, to which the city agreed.

“This change of position is indicative of the City's unwillingness to be transparent related to these proceedings and to follow the ordinance,” Beloit Health System CEO Tim McKeveitt said. “These actions indicate that the City's decision represents its will and not its judgment.”

In an email sent by Community Development Director Julie Christiansen on Nov. 30, Christiansen informed commissioners that OrthoIllinois “will proceed with finalizing site and architectural plans for staff review and approval” after the company claimed the project would be listed as a “new use” not previously defined in City of Beloit zoning ordinances.

In a letter sent Nov. 30 to McKeveitt from City Manager Lori Curtis Luther, Luther states “there is no legal basis” to disagree with the interpretation of the surgery center as a new use.

“As a result, no conditional use permit is required, and this item will not be placed on the Council agenda,” Luther wrote.

In response, McKeveitt said the health system was “disappointed” in the city's interpretation of the zoning process and change in its stance.



“The city staff’s decision is intended to remove this decision from the realm of Beloit’s elected officials,” McKeveitt said in a press release issued Wednesday. “The Beloit community elected its public officials to determine whether a conditional use permit is required under the ordinance to ensure orderly development that is in the City’s best interest. The decision by city staff disregards the ordinance and unlawfully usurps the power reserved to Beloit’s elected officials.”

OrthoIllinois proposes building a 25,605-square-foot surgery center with ambulatory service and lodging suites at 1350 Gateway Blvd., on a 5.69-acre property. Project documents show the center may host up to 30 outpatient surgeries weekly with the ability to lodge patients overnight as needed. The facility would include four operating rooms, 12 patient recovery rooms, a post-anesthesia care unit, sterile processing department and various support spaces.

If approved by city staff, construction could be completed by late summer of 2021.

OrthoIllinois CEO Dan Schreiner could not be reached for comment regarding the latest update as of press time Wednesday.

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