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Among Village's Most Ambitious Plans

New Tasty Dog Means Final Phase of Lake, Euclid Transformation to Begin

When the first hot dog went on sale in the new Tasty Dog restaurant, one of the most ambitious development plans for an Oak Park business district moved a step closer to completion.

Often referred to as the Euclid Terraces project, aspects of the multi-parcel development either completed or well along the way already are bringing a new look, new feel and new activity to the neighborhood. What was once two Village-owned surface parking lots and a gas station at Euclid Avenue and Lake Street is being transformed into a mix of townhomes, condominiums, commercial space and a 500-plus car public parking garage.

“The Tasty Dog move represents a significant milestone in our community development efforts,” said Village President Joanne E. Trapani. “The Village’s official involvement in the redevelopment plan for the site is among the few times municipal government here was able to translate a long-term development vision into an investment reality. We are witnessing the literal transformation of a corner once dominated by parking lots and gas stations to one of lovely homes and soon-to-be thriving retail businesses.”

Trapani said she was confident that after seeing the final outcome, early critics of the project would now see that the best interests of the community had been served.

“The most interesting aspect of this entire process is how it actually went full circle,” she said. “Relocating Tasty Dog was one of the first considerations for the project, and moving the restaurant to the current new location was the first offer made by the Village to the property owner. There was never a question of not saving the restaurant. We certainly never wanted to lose a business that had become a part of the fabric of our community.”

In addition to complementing other aspects of the Euclid Terraces project, the design of the new Tasty Dog incorporates many features intended to reduce the restaurant’s impact on the adjoining residential neighborhood. Trash will be enclosed in a special refrigerated room and high-tech exhaust scrubbers will minimize cooking odors. Even the peaked roof is part of the environmentally friendly design, helping to further dissipate odors and screen the mechanical equipment from public view.

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Extensive landscaping around the perimeter, as well as a fence at the rear will help buffer and screen nearby residential property. The speaker at the drive through window also has been positioned to send any stray sounds away from the residential property, and access to and from the restaurant is restricted to Lake Street.

“This is more than we could have ever dreamed of,” said Mike Barton, who operates Tasty Dog with his brother, Rob. “The Village has been unbelievably good to us. Yes, it was a little tough in the beginning, but I have come to realize that there was more a misunderstanding of each other than some kind of plot to get rid of us.

“Now, when I look around me, I understand what the Village wanted to do with the corner. Everyone at Village Hall has my sincere thanks and gratitude. I mean that. This is a dream come true.”

Meanwhile, work on the final phase of the overall project, a four-story apartment building with ground-level retail, will begin in a matter of weeks on the old Tasty Dog site. The design includes a landscaped, brick pedestrian walkway connecting Lake Street to the Avenue Garage, which was the first component of the overall development.

Euclid Terraces LLC, a joint venture by Focus Development Inc. of Northfield and Skokie-based Taxman Corp, developed the project. In addition to the Avenue Garage on North Boulevard, other aspects of the development include the completed condominiums on the northeast corner of Lake and Euclid, and townhomes under construction on North Boulevard and Euclid Avenue.

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