

Trustees, neighboring residents welcoming of Huntley brewery

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John Pellik, a resident of Crystal Lake, said during a Huntley Village Board meeting Thursday that he travels to Villa Park about once a month to pick up beer at More Brewing Co., often waiting in lines for an hour to do so.

Now, with the company planning to open a second location in Huntley, Pellik said it would be idiotic for the village not to welcome such a “class-act facility” into the community.

“The fact that you had them approach you about building a brewery in your town is a very big deal,” Pellik said.

Pellik’s comments came ahead of a conceptual review from More Brewing to renovate the former Chevrolet dealership at 13980 Automall Drive into a production facility, brewpub and restaurant.

More Brewing general manager Evan Morris said the project has been more than a year in the making, as he and his business partners searched the Chicago area for a location that not only made sense for their customers but for the community as well.

The Villa Park facility currently produces less than 5,000 barrels of beer a year, but with the addition of two grain silos and a maximum of two more in the future, More Brewing is hoping to boost its output.

“We look to double down here in Huntley,” Morris said.

The petitioner estimates that the project will bring about 75 new jobs to Huntley, village documents show.

Development services director Charles Nordman said late last year that the Village Board approved an amendment to its comprehensive plan for the Interstate 90/Route 47 gateway to include the Automall Drive location as an opportunity site for mixed commercial development that also would serve as a regional draw.

About 14,000 square feet of the space would be used to create a brewpub restaurant with an outdoor patio and special events area. The remaining 11,000 square feet would be used for production and would include a brewhouse; fermentation and conditioning vessels; a

packaging line; and a barrel room where beer will be aged in whiskey barrels before being packaged, according to village documents.

Further modifications would include two additional trash enclosures at the rear of the building to handle waste from the brewing process and the replacement of parking lot lighting for LED fixtures.

Under Illinois Liquor Commission statutes and regulations, the facility would not be allowed to serve wine and spirits. However, the petitioner intends to work with the commission to allow wine and spirit sales in the future.

The project will require board approval on a number of items, including a text amendment to add a microbrewery as a special use in the site's current zoning, a special use permit, a site plan review for the proposed modifications and a liquor license.

Trustees were supportive of the proposal.

"It looks good, and we'll be happy to have you," Trustee Timothy Hoeft said.

However, one concern that was raised was having appropriate signage that would attract motorists both entering and exiting the I-90 tollway.

Before the Village Board meeting, trustees approved a number of liquor license requests during the Liquor Commission's Thursday meeting, including one from Terence Hitpas, who represents Sew Hop'd Brewery LLC.

In April, the Village Board approved an ordinance authorizing the [development of the estimated 2,700-square-foot microbrewery](#) and outdoor seating area at 1 Union Special Plaza.

License requests for 2019 events such as Huntley Fall Fest, the Turkey Testicle Festival and Oktoberfest also were approved.

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