

## Ansay Set to Proceed with Massive Saukville project

### Northern Gateway Development promises as many as 620 homes, businesses, Mel's Charities community

By **CONNOR CARYNSKI** — Ozaukee Press staff

A large, multi-faceted development featuring retail, residential, nonprofit and green spaces proposed for the Village of Saukville is back on the table, and developers hope to begin work on the project this year.

The Northern Gateway Development is proposed for 99 acres of undeveloped land north Highway 33 between I-43 and Northwoods Road. The development would introduce between 520 and 620 residential units, commercial and business spaces, a hotel, a recreation space and a large plaza park that would serve as the development's hub.

The development would also create housing opportunities for adults with intellectual or devel-

opmental disabilities through Cedarburg-based Mel's Charities and provide them a community to work and socialize in.

Village President Barb Dickmann said if the project is completed in full, it would likely be the largest in Saukville's history.

Ansay Development Corp., along with the Milwaukee architectural firm Rinka, which designed Ansay's nearly completed Newport Shores building in Port Washington, unveiled the latest version of the project during a joint meeting with the Plan Commission and Village Board on April 20.

Northern Gateway was initially presented to the village in December 2020, but was delayed by the pandemic.



**A RENDERING** by the Milwaukee architectural firm Rinka shows the southern campus, referred to as Mel's Village, of Ansay Development's proposed Northern Gateway Development, which would be built on 99 acres north of Highway 33 between I-43 and Northwoods Road in Saukville.





**NORTHERN GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT** renderings created by the architect firm Rinka offer a glimpse of what could be Saukville's largest development in history. The north campus of the development would have streets lined with multi-family and single-family housing.

## Gateway: Homes, Plaza & Hotel Planned

Ansary Design/Construction Manager Ian McCain said during the hiatus, a more detailed plan was drafted and a strong team of supporters assembled to make it a reality.

The project is divided into a north and south campus with a road running parallel to I-43 connecting them.

The north campus would include 420 to 470 mixed-density residential units, 30 to 34 senior living residences and a 22 to 30-acre business park.

The south campus, referred to as Mel's Village, would include a plaza park space, retail and food spaces, office and commercial spaces, an indoor sports facility, a 110 unit hotel and another 120 to 150 residential units — 25% of which would be available to individuals with disabilities.

It would also include a day care facility, and Ansary representatives are in discussions with the Feith Family Ozaukee YMCA, which abuts the south campus, about a joint operating agreement.

A major component of the southern campus would be the large plaza space. Rinka Senior Design Director Eric Mayne said it would connect the residential, commercial and recreational aspects of the development. Events like concerts or movies in the park could be held in the space, Mayne said, drawing people to the village and driving business at shops around the square.

"Creating the right balance of mixed uses will really drive a thriving environment," he said.

Ansary President and COO Tom Meaux, former Ozaukee County administrator, said while working with the county he learned of a significant need for disability housing options in the area.

Before he retired from the county in 2017, Meaux said there were hundreds of adults with disabilities living at home with parents who were in their 70s and 80s. Meaux said it's important for there to be housing for these individuals in an integrated community with local establishments for them to shop and work.

Three Leaf Partners, an Elm Grove real estate development firm, is also involved in the project. Vice President David Luy,

previously the manager of real estate development for Mercy Housing — the nation's largest nonprofit developer of affordable housing for those with special needs — said he is excited working on a project that would have a large social impact on the community.

"On a personal and corporate level, that aspect of the social impact of the integrated housing to serve people with intellectual disabilities is really an exciting thing for us," he said.

In addition to helping individuals with disabilities, the development would also provide an enormous boon to the village.

McCain said his team is in discussions with a Saukville firm that may take up additional space in the development's business park area and would hire up to 100 people in its first year of operations.

"They would be a darned good corporate citizen for the village," he said.

The swath of new commercial, residential and business buildings would also greatly bolster the village's tax roll.

To fund the infrastructure that would support the development, McCain said his team is proposing a tax incremental financing district that would rely on increased taxes from the development. McCain said the district would pose no risk to the village and that the development would be responsible for generating revenue.

"What we want to make sure we're really clear about is that this is on us to execute and we intend to do so. The village isn't coming out of pocket to support us in this development," he said.

Projection of increment generated by the district in its lifespan is between \$140 million and \$160 million, McCain added.

Much preparation and planning have to occur before the development moves forward, but with a dream team assembled, McCain said he hopes to break ground on the project soon.

Studies on water, traffic and sewer to the area will have to be completed, rezoning is needed, a master development agreement must be created, details of the TIF district must be finalized and other processes must be finished before



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work begins.

"There's lots of steps, and we've got the team that has that laid out, to help and assist us to get there," McCain said. "We want to make sure we are able to push dirt around this year. Long story short, we'll see you guys a lot as we go through this."

The proposal was well received by trustees and Plan Commission members, but Trustee Scott Fischer asked if Saukville could draw enough people to occupy the residential units. He said between the Gateway project and the Emerald Ridge development on the west side of town, there would be homes for well over 1,000 people.

"We could double the size of Saukville. Are there really that many people who will move to Saukville to double the size of our community?" he asked.

McCain said there is a strong demand for housing in the Saukville area and that the mix of multi family and single-family housing would allow the development to ride out any dips in the housing market.

Dickmann said based on the project presentation and team of backers supporting the development, she believes the project is feasible.

"With the presentation we were given, it sounds like this is very viable right now and we are really looking forward to putting a shovel in the ground," she said.

No action was taken during the meeting but developers will continue to work with the village in future months to bring the plan to fruition.

Dickmann said the village is in conversations with Ansary about how to move forward with the project but that no dates have been set yet.



**A RENDERING OF MEL'S VILLAGE** campus of the Northern Gateway Development depicts multi-family housing buildings, storefronts and a plaza that developers believe would serve as a community hub with room for events and recreation.