



BLOOMFIELD-BIRMINGHAM EAGLE

Commission approves two bistros for Triangle District

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BIRMINGHAM - The city will soon welcome two bistros to the **Triangle District**, an area of the city bordered by Adams, Woodward and Maple roads. The City Commission unanimously approved final site plans and bistro licenses for a new restaurant called Forest Avenue Bistro, as well as for Papa Joe's Gourmet Market.

Forest Avenue Bistro - designed by architect Victor Saroki - will be located at the corner of Forest and Elm in the mixed-use building that is currently under construction.

The bistro, which will occupy the first level of the building, will have a full-service kitchen offering a wide variety of American cuisine for lunch and dinner.

Milford's Five Lakes Grill chef Brian Polcyn, whom Saroki referred to as "the best-known chef in the state," will act as the proprietor of Forest Avenue Bistro. Polcyn said the food would be contemporary, but moderately priced, with appetizers between \$5 and \$11 and main courses from \$15 to \$23.

Commissioner Gordon Rinschler said the plan for Forest Avenue Bistro meets all the requirements of what he envisioned for the bistro license.

"I know it embarrasses Mr. Polcyn, but I'm going to say he really is a rock star chef. This really is a big deal, bringing this restaurant to Birmingham," he said. Polcyn was a finalist for the Best Chef in the Midwest award in 2006 and his downtown Milford restaurant was named Restaurant of the Year in Michigan for 2005 and 2006.

Inside Forest Avenue Bistro, there will be seating for 64 people - including 10 seats at a bar. Outside, the 684-square-foot café directly adjacent to the building along Forest Avenue will accommodate approximately 30 more people. The bistro will be open for business from 11 a.m. to midnight Monday-Sunday and may feature smooth

jazz entertainment.

Because the building abuts some residential and commercial properties, some members of the public who live in the area spoke up at past meetings to share their concerns that the bistro would increase traffic, parking congestion and noise in the area.

For that reason, Commissioner Rackeline Hoff said she was somewhat apprehensive when she came into the meeting, and hadn't yet made up her mind. Toward the end, Hoff's concerns were addressed as the majority of residents in the area shared their support for the new bistro and only one or two spoke up in opposition.

Commissioner Tom McDaniel said the way this development was handled should be the prototype for future projects where a neighborhood abuts a commercial property.

"I think you've written the book *Victor* (Saroki), you and your team, on how to work with a neighborhood and how to address neighborhood concerns. I'm delighted to come in here tonight and find that the neighborhood by and large is in support of this thing. You've snatched victory from the jaws of defeat. Congratulations," he said.

Papa Joe's Gourmet Market is currently located within the **Triangle District** and has been operating for six years in Birmingham. It has had an outdoor dining area since 2003.

Papa Joe's new, 150-square-foot outdoor bistro will have a total of 24 seats - 14 on the sidewalk to the left of the market's main entrance on Woodward and 10 outdoor seats in the current plaza area, which are there now. In addition to the outdoor dining area, Papa Joe's will continue to provide 28 seats indoors and will construct a new door connecting the inside of the store to the outdoor dining area. The bistro will be in operation from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and will not have a bar area or feature any entertainment.

Papa Joe's "gourmet to go" department offers the daily preparation of entrees, side dishes, pastas and sauces from executive chef William Hall. The department also features sandwich, pasta and soup stations, and has chefs on hand to prepare any dish on the spot - to take away or dine in.

Anthony Curtis from Papa Joe's Gourmet Market said they serve "incredible food."

"People enjoy having a glass of wine with their meal. Sometimes they don't want to go to a restaurant and be served by a wait staff, they just want to come in and get a quick bite to eat and enjoy a glass of wine," he said.