

Big retailer eyes site

Meijer considers property in Marquette Township

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By RYAN JARVI - Journal Staff Writer , Mining Journal

MARQUETTE - Big box retailer Meijer has signed a purchase agreement for property in Marquette Township, company officials have confirmed.

Frank Guglielmi, senior director of communications for Meijer, said the company is interested in purchasing land located north of Lowe's Home Improvement near the intersection of U.S. 41 and Brickyard Road.

"We have a contract in place that allows us to purchase the property at a specific price," he said. "It does not mean we have purchased the property, it just means we are positioned to purchase the property."

Guglielmi said the company will go through a due diligence phase, which includes receiving site plan approval from the township and determining any needed improvements to the property infrastructure or nearby roadways.

"That will start taking place now that we have a signed contract, and then once we go through the due diligence phase, if everything works out that's the point that we purchase the property and then start building the store," he said.

Guglielmi said Meijer stores typically come in two sizes - 150,000 and 190,000 square feet.

"Most of our stores include a gas station," he said. "All of our stores include a garden center, a drive-up pharmacy, fresh bakery, fresh meat counter, things like that."

Guglielmi said no dates regarding beginning of construction or a store opening have been set, and he did not disclose terms of the agreement or the current property owner.

According to Marquette County officials, several acres of vacant land near Lowe's are owned by two separate property owners.

Up The Sky Development LLC owns roughly 30 acres in the vicinity of Lowe's, which had been planned for a shopping center, office buildings, residential space and a hotel resort.

Valdy Biernacki, a representative of Up The Sky LLC, said his group had discussions with Meijer months ago but no agreement was reached.

About 13 acres of property directly behind Lowe's is owned by Kona Ridge Mining LLC, a company organized by Roger Crimmins, who is also president of Ishpeming-based construction company A. Lindberg & Sons.

Crimmins could not be reached for comment.

Meijer in October closed on a property purchase for 50 acres of land in Escanaba that is expected to be the site of a supercenter and gas station, with a potential opening scheduled for 2017.

According to its website, the Grand Rapids-based Meijer has more than 200 stores in Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky.

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