

local news

Avondale Town Center rebuild set

Work will begin without tenant for grocery space

MARK CURNUTTE
MCURNUTTE@ENQUIRER.COM

AVONDALE - Physical work on the new Avondale Town Center is now expected to begin in less than two months.

Minus a tenant for the 15,000 square-foot grocery space.

"We have a closing and construction set for July," Jeff Beam of developer The Community Builders told The Enquirer. "But we had disruptions in the grocery product."

Community Builders, the city of Cincinnati and other partners in the multi-use project at the northwest corner of Reading Road and Forest Avenue have decided to move forward even without a grocery tenant.

"They feel it's important to get the project going," Beam said.

The developer is working to fill the grocery space with an independent retailer or other providers of fresh fruit, vegetables and meat in an effort to alleviate the lack of access to fresh produce in the neighborhood - a phenomenon known as a food desert.

Community Builders (TCB) sent a fully negotiated lease in January



Rendering of the Avondale Town Center, looking south on Reading Road. Physical work is expected to begin in less than two months. PROVIDED

2016 to the Missouri-based grocery chain Save-A-Lot, Beam said. The lease was not signed because of a pending sale of the discount chain to a private equity investor that was finalized in October.

"We're still fully behind the project," said Patricia Milton, president of the Avondale Community Council.

"We are exploring other options for the grocery. We know TCB is fully committed to getting a grocer. We're remaining diligent and patient and know the grocery will come."

The last grocery in Avondale, an Aldi, closed at the Town Center in November 2008.

The nine-acre, city-owned Town

Center site was originally developed in 1983 by a group including basketball great Oscar Robertson.

Most of the existing strip mall and two stand-alone buildings facing Reading Road, now homes to a fast-food restaurant and a check-cashing

Continued on Next Page