

Construction start set for grocery store

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By Thor Jourgensen/The Daily Item

Market Basket is one step closer to building a local store, said the Swampscott developer who owns the Federal Street land where the grocery chain wants to open for business.

Charles Patsios said drivers and pedestrians will start seeing construction on the former General Electric Factory of the Future site bordered by Federal and Western Avenue in the spring.

Patsios said National Grid workers recently disconnected the 24-acre site from its former River Works electrical power source and wired in a new power supply. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority is reviewing a request to install a bus stop on the future grocery store site.

“There’s a lot to do, but we’re getting there,” Patsios said.

He bought the former manufacturing site in the city’s center last May from General Electric under an agreement calling for Market Basket to renovate the former factory building for use as a store with Patsios providing parking and other site improvements.

“A site plan and road improvements are being finalized,” Patsios said.

While Market Basket plans proceed, traffic and parking changes are still being discussed for a proposed CVS store planned for 47-65 Boston St.

City councilors listened this week as Assistant City Solicitor James Lamanna discussed CVS developer Scott Mitchell’s plan to spend nearly \$300,000 purchasing and installing a traffic signal at Boston and Ford streets before turning the traffic light over to the city to own.

Other intersection signal improvements are planned along Boston Street, one of the city’s busiest commercial routes, but the owners of local Dunkin’ Donuts franchises, including one on Boston Street near CVS’ proposed entrance and exit, have sued a city board arguing against the signal upgrades.

Lynn attorney Samuel Vitali on Friday said the Boston and Ford streets signal will disrupt customer traffic flow through the Dunkin’s drive-through lane.

“They have it down to a science. They time orders precisely,” Vitali said.

He said a Boston and Ford streets signal could “have an adverse effect” on other Boston Street businesses with drive-through lanes.

“What happens at that intersection will be like a ripple effect down that street,” he said.

The Zoning Board of Appeals approved parking changes sought by CVS last year with board member Jeanne Curley noting in the board’s letter of decision that traffic signal upgrades “will improve the flow of traffic for

the betterment” of the city.

The board’s decision prompted Mello’s lawsuit with the franchise owner arguing the board exceeded its authority.

The five-member zoning board voted unanimously to approve spaces measuring 9 feet by 18 feet for CVS. City ordinance requires spaces to be 8.5 feet by 20 feet.

City Councilor at large Brendan Crighton this week proposed revising the city’s space dimensions to bring them in line with national standards. The council will probably review the revisions in February.