



Food distributor Driscoll could open Wayne site by early next year

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Driscoll Foods could move into the township as early as next year after its plans to double its floor size in the building it will occupy, the former headquarters of drug-maker Bayer AG, were approved by the township planning board's this week.

The family-owned company announced last September it had outgrown its 217,139-square-foot Clifton facility and would move to Wayne to expand its space, operations and workforce.

The company's site plan for a new 396,401-square-foot warehouse was approved unanimously by the Planning Board on Monday, putting the company a step closer to a 2016 move-in. It now needs various environmental permits and other approvals before it can break ground.

Tim Driscoll, president of the company, said at the board meeting the move would enable the company to increase its number of employees from 450 now to 800 in five years.

The project entails demolishing the 137,048 of existing office space and building a new 396,401-square-foot warehouse, as well as two two-story office building additions of 12,624 square feet total. An existing driveway would be abandoned and two new driveways would be created for truck-only access.

The company, started by Driscoll's father in 1971, distributes meats, poultry, milk, dairy products, grocery, cleaning supplies, paper and other products, to restaurants, food services, jails and country clubs within a 120 mile radius of Clifton.

During the meeting, a company engineer said that goods would be transported into the Wayne location, stored and then sent out for delivery. More than 100 trucks would go in and out using a loading dock facing Westbelt Road, away from homes along Barnsdale Road. There would be parking space for 609 vehicles.

Also discussed at the meeting were trees — some would be taken down but more would be planted — and measures to minimize sound and light reaching nearby homes. Trees and sound retaining walls are planned.

The board heard testimony from the company's lawyers, engineer, architect and sound experts. Driscoll said once the company's plans are approved, employees could be ready to move in by April 2016.

The company pledged to keep intact McCoog Park, on the northern end of the property. The park was named in memory after Glenn E. McCoog, a firefighter who died in 1983, and includes a soccer field, playground and a basketball court.

"It means a lot to a lot of people," Mayor Chris Vergano said at the meeting, thanking the company for the decision.

Vergano also said the company is "one of the largest new ratables that Wayne Township has seen in a long time." The 2014 local taxes on the property were \$561,502, the tax assessor told The Record in September.

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