



**THE FORMER Edward Fox Photography studio, 4900 N. Milwaukee Ave., was demolished this week. Tentative plans call for a mixed-use development on that was also going to be demolished this week.**

# Several buildings demolished

by **BRIAN NADIG**

Demolition of the former Edward Fox Photography, Ernest Meyer Interiors and Finney Company buildings on Milwaukee Avenue this week and a large section of land that went up for sale in the Jefferson Park business district reflects the state of redevelopment in the area.

Tentative plans call for a mixed-use development at 4900-08 N. Milwaukee Ave., where the photography studio and upholstery store have been located. The buildings were across from the Jefferson Park CTA Terminal, 4917 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Alderman John Arena's chief of staff Owen Brugh said that there are no final redevelopment plans for the site, and that efforts will be made to ensure that any development will give a good first impression to the thousands of commuters who walk by daily. "It's the front door of our community," he said.

being vacated and turned into a pedestrian plaza, where mini concerts or other small events could be held. He said that a lot more pedestrians use the alley than vehicles.

Also, the front part of the two-story Finney building that was demolished at Milwaukee and Cullom avenues consisted of commercial space and apartments and a rear warehouse-style structure, with a truss ceiling and curved roofline. The Finney Company is a promotional products company that relocated several years ago to the suburbs.

Several commercial companies had expressed interest in leasing the building in part due to the unusual nature of the ceiling, but there was a partial collapse of the roof, and it was never repaired, Brugh said. Building code citations were issued, he said.

Under a preliminary plan last year, the Mega Group proposed building nine apartments on the lot. But Brugh said that plan is being reconsidered. The site is located across from the Mercantile

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provide statements of approval rather than business operators directly impacted by SSA services. Herren and Hammer said that most local Edgebrook businesses and many chamber businesses rent their storefronts, and many business owners believed that their voices might be ignored in favor of landlords, few of whom attended the meeting.

"This survey doesn't ask 'Are you in favor of an SSA.' It asks if you want snow removal," Jan Kupiec of the Edgebrook Community Association and Everyday Edgebrook said. "Is there going to be a question asked of the business owners, and possibly the residents, 'Do you want the SSA?'"

Tim Pomaville, who owns property within the SSA, said that he refuses to support the taxing district.

"It seems 20 percent is such a low threshold, it's not right. I know that the aldermen gave support for them to start this process. I really hope that if all they get is 20 percent they slam the door on this, because that is not the will of the community, that's not the will of the owners," he said. Pomaville also questioned whether SSA commissioners could be trusted to prevent spikes to the maximum tax rate.

"The (SSA) commission would have to approve (a tax rate raise) at a public meeting, where the public can provide testimony and feed back to the commission," Roschen said. "Then before we are able to introduce any ordinance to a city council vote — and the SSA budget is an annual ordinance — we need both aldermen to sign that ordinance. If you make your voices heard to the aldermen, they can sign any action that the commission proposes."

Aldermen Margaret Laurino (39th) and Anthony Napolitano (41st) issued letters of support to look into the possible creation of

funded services could include beautification through neighborhood wayfinding signs, holiday lighting or hanging plant baskets, planning special events such as a Christmas market, power-washing of sidewalks, new bike racks, or funding a facade rebate program for business owners, based upon an Edgebrook needs assessment conducted by an SSA Advisory Committee.

When a special service area is established, the city contracts with a local nonprofit organization to administer it. Commissioners appointed by the mayor oversee and recommend the annual services, budget and service provider agency. If approved, the special service area would be managed by the chamber.

At the meeting, attendees showed skepticism to the effectiveness of the proposed SSA services.

"Start those flower pots up," one attendee said. "I've been trying to keep my street from flooding for nearly 40 years, but now we're going to have flower pots and bike racks. I appreciate it."

"Do you have any metrics to measure the effectiveness (of SSA programs)? Its great to have planters and decorations... but is it actually improving the businesses as far as revenue?" one business owner asked.

"Local businesses that aren't dependent on foot traffic are they actually going to benefit from having a planter outside?"

Attendees were given surveys to explore what types of services they would prefer.

Attendees said that lack of parking is a major commercial obstacle and instead proposed SSA-funded parking lots, although parking is not allowed in an SSA-funded area, according to Mark Roschen, assistant commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development.

At the meeting, business owners expressed dissatisfaction with the