



ON REAL ESTATE

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FRESH MARKET, ZOËS KITCHEN PLANNED

\$34M shopping center to rise in Blue Bell

If John McKenna has anything, it's staying power.

The president of Madison Development Group Inc. has finally broken ground on Centre Square Commons, a \$34 million, 110,000-square-foot retail center at the intersection of routes 202 and 73 in Whitpain, a Montgomery County community. Across from what many refer to as the Kohl's center, the site and the development have in one form or another been eyed by McKenna for years. It's just been now that he's been able to achieve any of his goals.

"In the early 1990s when I was with Montgomery Realty, I had identified it for Acme Markets," McKenna said. "It was a very complicated site."

Acme never moved forward with a store and other developers came up with plans that didn't go anywhere.

McKenna went about his business until the property was reintroduced to him four years ago. Its challenges were



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The developer believes there's demand for a new center.

still steep but he dug in and assembled 10 different parcels involving five different property owners. One parcel had been owned by the state and a Senate bill needed to be sponsored for McKenna to acquire it and transfer ownership.

In all, he pulled together 22 acres

as one big site. McKenna went back to the drawing board and, working with the township, had a "meeting of the minds," he said.

An overlay district was put in place and McKenna planned a seven-building lifestyle center. His joint venture partner is Kinsley Properties, a Wyomissing construction company that has a development arm.

Three years ago, McKenna started marketing the project to tenants and they responded.

"I think this is an underserved market," McKenna said.

A Fresh Market, a Greensboro, N.C., grocery chain, is the anchor, and among the other tenants are Starbucks, Zoës Kitchen, Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza, Hallmark and PetValu.

The first phase will consist of five buildings set to open at the beginning of next year. The final two buildings will get under construction in October. Five acres will remain open space.