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300 acres freed for development

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LIBERTY TWP. - A nearly six-month-long building ban was partly lifted this week, freeing about 300 acres for development along a main business artery in this growing Butler County suburb.

But commercial development remains frozen for the next four months on Cincinnati-Dayton Road near the Butler County Regional Highway as a dispute over tougher development rules for that area continues.

The end of the ban means two stalled construction projects can move forward: a business park on Wyandot Lane and an office condo behind the former Kroger building on Cincinnati-Dayton Road, said Jon West, town-

ship director of planning and zoning.

The end of the ban also helps remove obstacles to two big proposals.

The \$13 million Liberty Falls medical office and retail development along Cincinnati-Dayton Road is scheduled to break ground in February.

An architect for Mark Williams Ford contacted township officials Wednesday about opening a dealership on the southwest corner of Interstate 75 and the Butler County Regional Highway, behind Tri-County Heating & Cooling.

However, development remains on hold along Cincinnati-Dayton Road from Hamilton-Mason Road to just north of Liberty One Drive.

That's where a controversy

has emerged over the township's new, stricter standards for commercial development along Cincinnati-Dayton Road.

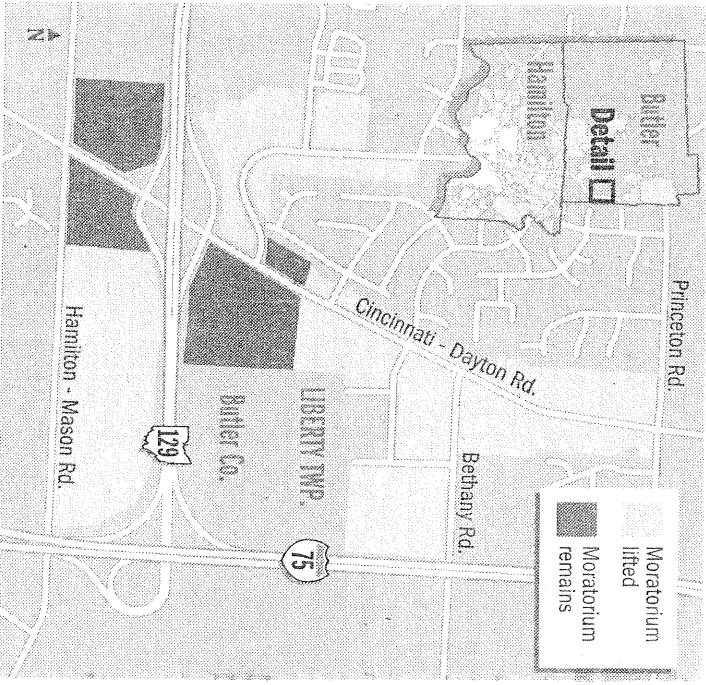
The new rules would block plans for a car wash just north of the Butler County Regional Highway on Cincinnati-Dayton Road. The developer, Steven Miller, manager of SPM Real Estate Geogeville in Cincinnati, has tried twice since October to gather enough signatures to force a public vote on the new rules.

The township is challenging the validity of the first set of petitions. The second set of petitions have been passed along to the Butler County Board of Elections for review.

If those petitions stand, a referendum vote could be held during the May 8 primary.

Development ban partly lifted

Developers can move forward with projects that had been restricted since last summer in some parts of Liberty Township. But a moratorium remains in effect along Cincinnati-Dayton and Yankee Roads while a dispute over new development rules continues.



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