

West county development

plan praised

Land will be used for senior housing lots

By ELIZABETH LEIS
Staff Writer

A plan to build more than 2,000 homes in Odenton has met with approval from neighbors, who say the community for affluent seniors is the best option for land they figure will be developed one way or another.

Two Rivers, which would sit on 1,471.5 acres near the Patuxent River, is being developed by Gary Koch of Koch Homes and John Stamato. The gated community will have 2,060 attached and detached homes for adults over age 55.

Amenities include a 110-acre golf course, a community center and an indoor-outdoor pool. The golf course would sit on land currently used for mining.

At a hearing before the county administrative officer last Tuesday, Sue Meyer, secretary of the Forks of the Patuxent Improvement Association, testified in support of the project. She attributed the approval from the community to Mr. Stamato's communicating with the residents. Around three or four years ago, he took around 30 residents up to Lakewood, N.J., to see an adult community there.

"It's been give and take," Ms. Meyer said. "There's an effort in keeping the flavor of the community as it is now."

Buz Meyer, president of the improvement association, said there is no way to completely keep out development of this rural section of Odenton.

"Wouldn't you rather have an active senior community as opposed to a landfill or a jail?" he said.

Some of the 25 people who attended the hearing still had concerns.

Andrew Meyer, whose property would border the development, said the original plan called for a clubhouse to be next to his land. Now, there's a parcel with 41 homes scheduled.

But he was confident the issue would be resolved.

"With Mr. Stamato, we've worked out everything so far," Mr. Meyer said.

The community has fought for years

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to preserve the environment in the area, and the developers said they've exceeded requirements by setting aside 400 acres for open space.

No homes are scheduled to be built closer than a quarter-mile from the Patuxent River, and others are being built a half-mile or .38-mile away from the river.

Ms. Meyer also said she hoped the development would impede approval of the Chesapeake Terrace landfill. The landfill, developed by Silver Spring-based Halle Cos., would sit in the Forks of the Patuxent community.

Mr. Stamato said he expects the development to be a hot commodity for seniors "whether the landfill happens or doesn't happen."

Another developer involved in the project, WM. P. Gerald Jr. of Classic Community Cos., predicted an influx of baby boomers in the Baltimore-Washington corridor. This development, filled with "like-minded people," would have a "critical mass of lifestyle amenities."

"Given the golf course and the gated entrance, it will be the only community of its type in the county," he said.

Plus, the development will bring in an "enormous amount of tax revenue" to the county, Mr. Gerald said.

Administrative Hearing Officer Stephen LeGendre will release a decision next month, and Mr. Stamato hopes some homes could be available in 2008.

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