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Zoning board gives green light for upscale housing development at Bedford Village Inn

By Kimberly Houghton Union Leader Correspondent

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This conceptual design on file at Bedford Town Hall depicts nine new homes proposed to be constructed next to the Bedford Village Inn.

Provided by TF Moran

Bedford zoning officials have paved the way for a gated housing community to be built on property next to The Grand at Bedford Village Inn.

The zoning board has approved three waivers to allow construction of the Hillside Residences at the BVI, including a waiver to forego affordable housing requirements. The upscale development will include nine single family homes of about 2,500 to 3,500 square feet.

It will be reserved for residents ages 55 and older.

“The Hillside community will lend itself to architecture that is not seen in Bedford,” Jack Carnevale, owner and president of BVI, told the zoning board recently.

Carnevale’s attorney, Ari Pollack, said the development will span about 7.5 acres and include a private roadway and a home reserved for Carnevale. According to zoning regulations, affordable housing is required for 25% of the housing units on Olde Bedford Way, which would represent three

out of the nine homes being proposed, said Pollack, who asked the zoning board for relief from this requirement since it is a low-density development where dozens of units are actually permitted.

“It is really our position that the affordable (housing) piece will sink this layout, not development as a whole,” said Pollack, stressing this design with nine homes instead of numerous units is the desire of the developer and abutters.

Sue Thomas, a member of the zoning board, said the proposed housing community matches the character of the area and nearby developments.

“I think it fits in well to that as opposed to a bigger multi-unit complex,” said Thomas.

However, Len Green of the zoning board said developers should approach the board with plans that fulfill the affordable housing requirement.

“This is not being done in this case,” said Green, noting other developments have had to comply with the affordable housing component and the board should be treating these situations equally.

A local developer, Bill Greiner, echoed those concerns, saying he owns a workforce housing development a few hundred yards from the site. Several other workforce housing complexes have already been successfully created in town, including one for residents 55 and older.

“It can exist ... it is not what the developer desires, I understand that,” said Greiner.

“Every decision we look at is independent,” board Chairman John Morin said.

Several members said this is a unique situation and the affordable housing issue seems to be more applicable to multi-unit housing, not a small, single-family housing complex.

The three variances granted by the zoning board, including the waiver for affordable housing, a waiver to impact the existing buffer and a waiver to allow a non-cluster elderly housing development, will allow the owner an opportunity to utilize the property, according to Morin.

“We are looking to make this a real active-lifestyle community,” said Carnevale, adding he has had a vision for this type of facility for more than 30 years.

The project must still be considered by the local planning board.

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