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Commission approves variances on 296-unit Lyndhurst complex

Friday, December 31, 2010

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The Record
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LYNDHURST — The final variances on Meadow Crossing, a 296-unit residential complex near Orient Way and Marin Avenue, have been approved by the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission as commissioners continue to review the plan, officials said.

The board of commissioners granted two bulk variances this month for parking and loading space requirements, documents show.

No date has been set for further discussion. Public hearings on the four-building project are complete.

"The NJMC is analyzing the site plan," Brian Aberback, a spokesman for the Meadowlands Commission, said Thursday.

Since 2008, when a larger project was proposed, Russo Development of Carlstadt



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streamlined the layout, paving the way for upscale housing to replace an abandoned industrial site.

"We submitted a revised site suitability application to the NJMC on May 3, 2010, which included a revised site plan and project impact assessment," Edward Russo, the developer, said Thursday.

The 43-page letter includes a traffic impact analysis, demographic studies, projected tax revenues and statistics comparing similar projects and the effect on township schools.

"This project will transform this unsightly and underutilized industrial site into a high-quality residential project that will provide needed affordable housing and real estate tax revenue for the community," the letter stated.

The multistory development includes 60 affordable housing units and a 6,500-square-foot clubhouse with swimming pool.

In the application, commissioners granted the developer permission for 448 parking

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spaces instead of 591, as required by ordinance for a project of its size.

While setting the parking limit, commissioners required an additional study once the first building is completed and reaches 92 percent occupancy, to gauge the number of cars at the site.

A second variance permits the development to dispense with a 12-by-30-foot loading space for a five-story building.

A 374-unit development, proposed by Russo two years ago, drew strong criticism from township officials and residents because of its size, density and the amount of traffic it would bring to the neighborhood.

"The project, as it was then, was almost 100 more units," Mayor Richard DiLascio said. "The breakdown of one- and two-bedroom apartments was different, so we think the impact on the schools would have been noticeably different."

The original plan called for 247 one-bedroom units, 110 two-bedroom units and 15 three-bedroom units, with 464 parking spaces, according to the plan's blueprints.

The 8.8-acre site, which sits at a corner that is often congested with traffic trying to make

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turns, was also a concern because of the number of cars it would bring to the area.

Talks among the commission, the developer and the town to install traffic signals and build a new roadway to eliminate traffic backup at the intersection has softened the town's attitude toward the development, the mayor said.

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