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Newcomb senior citizen apartment tower near done, Vineland OKs changes to 2nd phase

Joseph P. Smith, Vineland Daily Journal
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VINELAND — The first of two high-rise apartments for senior citizens is nearly complete at the site of the former Newcomb Hospital and should be ready to get its certificate of occupancy from the city in January, in line with its development expectations as work started a year ago.

Hans Lampart, owner of Eastern Pacific Development, was before city planners on Oct. 27 to get approval for several changes to phase two for Newcomb Senior Apartments.

The complex is going up on about 3 acres just south of East Almond Street, with South State and Howard streets on its eastern and western borders respectively. The first, four-story apartment building will hold 65 apartments.

Lampart said the project, which broke ground in October 2021, has struggled with its budget this year due to cost increases and that has affected the design. The New Jersey Housing Mortgage Finance Agency, already a major funding source, agreed to his request to provide more money, he said.

Lampart said at the hearing it also was decided to add five more apartments to the second tower design, bringing the number from 65 units to 70 units.

The Planning Board agreed to the additional units as well as other changes, including cancelling a driveway that would have allowed traffic to move through the property from Howard Street to South State Street.

“Basically, we took this project over from another developer,” Lampart reminded members. “So, this ... roadway, was ‘assumed.’ If I had started from a clean slate, we wouldn’t have this. We’d just have our main entrance off Almond (Street).”

Lampart said it has become clear that the roadway as planned would introduce parking difficulties. Residents from the surrounding neighborhood are pressed for parking spaces and already use grassy areas and sidewalks, he said.

“And it would just be a nightmare to police whose car is whose,” Lampart said. “And it would affect the tenant’s ability to park.”

Another change the board approved was in the location for a sign salvaged from the demolished hospital for use as a monument. The sign will now be distanced from a planned gazebo and moved closer to the East Almond Street entrance, which Lampart said will increase its visibility.

Lampart also noted two electric vehicle charging stations are included in both construction phases.

The original Planning Board approval for the high-rises was in April 2019. Disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 then stalled the start of construction.

Joe Smith is a N.E. Philly native transplanted to South Jersey more than 30 years ago, keeping an eye now on government in South Jersey. He is a former editor and current senior staff writer for The Daily Journal in Vineland, Courier-Post in Cherry Hill, and the Burlington County Times.

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