

LEADER TIMES

Final public meeting held on proposed Kittanning Cottages

By Tom Mitchell

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KITTANNING — About 40 residents gathered Monday at the fourth and final public meeting on the proposed Kittanning Cottages.

Also present were four members of borough council — President Gerald Shuster, Lisa McCanna, Angelo Turco and Thomas Close — as well as representatives from the Trek Development Group, and project architect Stefani Danes of Perkins Eastman Architects, Pittsburgh.

Trek President Bill Gatti said final plans include 24 housing units in 13 buildings and a 360-square-foot community room. He said the housing units will have one or two bedrooms and each will be about 1,000 to 1,200 square feet.

Also, each unit will have laundry hook-ups, a refrigerator, stove, dishwasher and garbage disposal. Lawn care and landscaping will be the responsibility of the management corporation.

Gatti said Kittanning cottages will be privately owned and \$1.3 million of the project is financed by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, another \$505,000 in tax credits.

He said prospective residents must be retired, have an income that does not exceed \$24,000 annually and be age 55 or older. A waiting list will be developed that will take into consideration an applicant's credit history, housekeeping habits and a background check. Rents for the units will range from \$450 to \$700 a month. Residents may have a small pet; restrictions will be based on type and size of the pet.

One borough resident said she has custody of her grandson and asked if grandchildren would be permitted in the development. Gatti said there would be provisions for such situations and would be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Several residents living near the proposed project raised concerns about traffic. Danes said development residents who drive primarily would use the main entrance off North McKean Street. A connector to North Chestnut Street is planned to expedite emergency traffic. Danes said there undoubtedly would be a traffic increase.

Answering concerns about adjacent property values, Gatti said: "The

development will contribute to the architectural development of the borough and be a hive of activity for seniors.

He added, "In the last 20 years Trek has built 46 such developments in Western Pennsylvania. If anything, property values have increased."

Lisa McCanna said that housing values in the borough are down now.

"We are about as low as we can get," she said. "This money coming into the tax coffers can do nothing but help us."

Shuster said that for the past 60 years the site was occupied first by the former Allegheny Energy Co., then by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He said neither entity paid property taxes.

"This project will be a financial boon to the borough," he said.

Gatti said Trek Development and Perkins Eastman Architects will meet with council on Oct. 4 to seek final approval for the project. He added that once approval is obtained construction would proceed and, depending on winter weather, could be completed by August.

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