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## Forks OKs housing project

**The Courts at Newlins Road will consist of 36 town homes.**

By Joe Nixon Of The Morning Call

A proposed 36-unit town home development in Forks narrowly won final approval Thursday from township supervisors.

The project, on 14 acres bounded by Sullivan Trail, Newlins Road West and Kesslersville Road, remained the subject of storm water concerns among some supervisors. The board voted 3-2 to approve the land development plan for The Courts at Newlins Road, with Supervisors Bonnie Nicholas and David Howell representing the dissent.

The project drew concern from the township Planning Commission last month because of a storm water flood plain that bisects the property. No homes will be built in the 100-year flood plain, but some planners had reservations about the closeness of some of the residences to the plain area, with some 35-50 feet away. Citing safety concerns, the planners voted against recommending approval.

The developer, Easton-based Cahill Properties, agreed last month to additional landscaping to delineate the flood-plain boundary.

Project engineer Fidel Gonzalez Jr. of RETTEW, Lower Nazareth Township, said units bordering the flood-plain area also will be 5 feet above the flood-plain boundary.

Supervisor John Ackerman said he asked a lot of questions about the project, and also contacted the Northampton County Soil Conservation District.

"Everyone has said this plan will work as far as conservation is concerned, and that's the biggest concern there is," he said. "I think it's a good plan for that site."

"Every 'i' has been dotted. Every 't' has been crossed," said township engineer Fred Hay, noting that the project met all local, state and federal standards.

Nicholas said she didn't believe the project agreed with part of the Two Rivers Area Greenway Plan against the addition of storm water to the 100-year flood plain.

Howell said the housing was "too dense" and that storm water work in the whole area around the Newlins Road-Sullivan Trail intersection should be addressed at the same time.

The developer is adding an additional storm water pipe under Sullivan Trail and is contributing money toward more off-site storm water and road improvements on the west side of Sullivan Trail, an area that readily floods in heavy rains. The work on the west side of Sullivan Trail should occur in spring, Hay said.

"I'm happy it's done. It's been a long time," developer Bob Cahill said. "They are going to be nice units." The town homes will be at least 2,000 square feet, he said.

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