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From The Morning Call

Forks planners tell developer to try again

They want to compare 800-home, 162-home plans, perhaps eye something in between.

By Fred Walter
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Developers for the proposed Kings Farm residential subdivision will come back next month to show the Forks Township Planning Commission their original sketch plan for about 800 homes to be built in clustered units on 380 acres along Newlins Road East and Richmond Road.

That plan first met with some criticism because of the large number of homes when it was shown to township officials on an informal basis several months ago. This would require a zoning change to allow for the high-density use in the farmland preservation district.

Dennis Brenner, attorney for developers Signature Homes and Nic Zawarski & Son, and Andrew Bohl of Hanover Engineering returned Thursday night with a new concept that follows the conventional requirements of the zoning code. This subdivided most of the land into 2-acre lots, the minimum allowed, creating a total of 162 home sites split between separate tracks on the northeast and northwest corners of Richmond Road and Newlins Road East. It would require an individual septic system for each house and would not provide adequate open space areas.

The planners didn't waste much time expressing their objections that the new plan represents suburban sprawl-type development. "This is a drastic change," said Vito Tamborino Jr., commission chairman. "We were looking for something in between," he said, referring to a compromise between the two plans.

Tamborino, supported by the other commission members, told Brenner to come back for the Aug. 11 meeting with both sketch plan versions to make it easier to compare the options. Some of the commission members never saw the first sketch plan for the 800 homes that would provide about 40 acres of open space and parkland areas.

"We have not been given the full opportunity to look at that plan," said commissioner Dean Turner, because it was never formally submitted to the commission.

Brenner didn't hesitate to accept the chance to bring back the developers' preferred plan and discuss the density issue. "Maybe we misread the community," he said of the earlier cool reception to the first plan. "The plan is light years superior," he said, noting that the open space would be developed as active park and recreation areas. He said about \$10 million would be given as a capital donation for the township, including a new public works garage, a library and improvements to township parks.

Brenner said about 400 of the housing units would be limited to active adults with no children, easing the burden on classrooms in local schools. The project would be served by public water and sewer service, eliminating the use of on-lot sand-mound septic systems. "Sand-mounds work, but they're just plain ugly," Brenner said.

In other action, the planners gave final approval to developer Joseph Pannuccio for his 21-lot Country Estates located at Newlins and Kesslerville roads.

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