

Plan Commission tables conceptual approval of 72-unit residential project in Foster Commons corridor

The Village of Saukville Plan Commission decided Tuesday it needs at least another month to consider a plan that would put 72 units of affordable housing on a 6.5-acre site in the 200 block of South Riverside Drive.

Developer Michael Lerner appeared before the commission seeking conceptual approval for the apartment project in the village's Foster Commons entertainment corridor.

The overlay zoning for the corridor calls for a mix of residential and commercial uses, although a zoning change would probably be needed for the multifamily project.

The building site is on the east side of Riverside Drive, on a parcel known as the Briggs property.

The development would include multiple buildings, a community center and 36 shared garages.

Lerner said he envisions the project being equally divided between two-bedroom and three-bedroom units, which he called "stacked flats," with each having two bathrooms.

The two-bedroom units would range in size from 1,000 to 1,075 square feet, while the three-bedroom units would be between 1,100 and 1,175 square feet.

Lerner said he hopes to tap into WHEDA funding to create the development that could cost as much as \$10 million.

While WHEDA tax incentives would allow reduced rents, he said rents would be between \$900 and \$1,100 a month without the program.

"First off, I want to make clear this is not subsidized housing. The tenants would be paying 100% of the rents," Lerner told the commission.

"I have been involved in WHEDA projects and subsidized housing for 20 years, and my experience is that tenants feel a lot more connected with affordable housing because they are paying the full freight. I think a better term for what we are proposing is 'workforce housing' instead of affordable housing."

It would not be the first affordable housing project in the village. The Harvest Meadows apartment complex was developed as affordable housing in the village in the 1990s.

Lerner said high standards would be set for the maintenance of the property, and would be

Riverside Dr. apartments proposed

Written by Mark Jaeger

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closely monitored by an on-site manager and full-time maintenance staff.

A market study showed there is a need for affordable housing options in the community, he said.

“We believe this project will fit in very well with the Saukville market and provide quality, safe, affordable housing for working families in the area,” Lerner said.

“When I look for a site to develop, I look for good schools, parks, shopping and an area that will see growth, because this is an investment for us. I think we find all of those things in Saukville.”

Because the development would be owned by a taxable entity, it would pay its full share of property taxes, Lerner said.

Still, the impact of the development was cause for concern for commission member Don Brach, especially the likelihood of sending a surge of new students into the school system.

Lerner said a project of the proposed size would attract as many as 80 school-age children.

The commission voted against a conceptual approval of the plan by a 4-3 vote.

“I don’t know that I am ready to start the ball rolling,” said Trustee Robert Hamann, a member of the commission.

The commission then unanimously voted to table the proposal until its January meeting.