

Two Rivers plan moving forward

2,060-home project up for hearing

By ELIZABETH LEIS
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A team of developers is moving forward with a plan to build 2,060 homes for older adults and a golf course in Odenton, raising environmental concerns about rapid development in west county.

Developers Gary Koch of Koch Homes and John Stamato of Two Rivers LLC will ask a county hearing officer for a special exception permit at a hearing Dec. 20 in Annapolis for Two Rivers, a planned unit development for people 55 and older in the Forks of the Patuxent community on the north and south sides of Conway Road.

"This project will provide long-term county residents with an attractive alternative to moving south away from family to find a high quality planned community," Mr. Stamato wrote in an e-mail. "This will be a tax positive project that will provide Anne Arundel County with a projected \$20 million per year in positive tax revenue."

The homes, single-family or single-unit villas, would sit on 1,471.5 acres near the Patuxent River, according to county records. Plans also include a 110-acre golf course and a 35,000-square-foot clubhouse near Meyers Station Road and Grays Ford Road, and a community center. Other amenities include walking trails, tennis and bocce courts, a community garden and an indoor-outdoor pool.

Mr. Stamato said there will be no homes built within the Patuxent River Greenway,



Capital graphic

which extends a quarter-mile from the river.

That's little comfort for Fred Tutman, the Patuxent riverkeeper, who said he doesn't see the need for the rapid growth in the area.

"This whole growth thing is completely out of control," Mr. Tutman said. "We turn these neighborhoods into junk like the discarded beer cans we throw in the river. Sprawl is a particular phenomenon that's accelerating those rapidly fleeing from the cities. We confuse sprawl with concept. The more we create, the more they demand it."

Mr. Tutman also said golf courses "are like people — propped up with chemicals."

The land is currently used for mining operations in various states of completion. Mr. Stamato said the golf course will be within the mined areas and developed as a "reclamation project" similar to the Davidsonville Renditions golf course, also built on the site of a former mine.

The developers are also considering engineering a trail system through created wetlands and ponds as part of the reclamation of the mining areas. The land is farther north than the tidal portion of the Patuxent River, and thus outside the jurisdiction of county critical area laws.

Mr. Stamato said the partners "plan to work with the county and state to assure that we make a significant positive impact to the local area traffic." Although thousands of workers affiliated with Fort George G. Meade are expected to arrive in the next five years as a result of base realignments, he said there are no plans to change the community's designation from "active adult."

Some residents said they support the project because of the possible alternative of a landfill, even if they have concerns about increased traffic.

"They seemed to support that versus other things that could come in there," said Bert Rice, a former County Council member and Odenton resident. "I haven't heard a lot of opposition."

Mr. Stamato, who said the company has offered \$7 million for schools and educational activities upon approval, said he hopes to begin construction on the infrastructure by the spring of 2007, and have homes available in 2008. There has already been interest in the project, but there will be no waiting list until Two Rivers is approved, he said.

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