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FEATURED

Trustees approve site plan for Geauga Lake

Anastasia Nicholas

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BAINBRIDGE — Township Board of Trustees Monday unanimously approved the site plan for apartments on the Geauga Lake property.

“We’re going to deliver a product that hopefully the community is very proud of,” said Pete LaRose, director of site acquisition for Vision Development. “I grew up down the road from here, so I’m not just a guy from out of town who came here to build apartments. I came to Geauga Lake every summer as a kid. So this means a lot to me, too.”

Township officials also were upbeat about the proposal.

“I’m so excited for the communities to see it because it really does have that nostalgia,” Trustee Lorrie Sass Benza said about the apartment plans, which speak to the history of the Geauga Lake property.

The site plan approval was contingent on several actions by Vision Development including the submission of civil construction drawings consistent with the approved plans; submission of a stormwater management/sediment control plan approved by Geauga Soil and Water; provision of the executed, recorded deed proving Vision’s ownership of the parcel of property; payment of all fees and costs set forth in the zoning application fees; and submission of all other items, and satisfaction of all other requirements, set forth in the master consent judgment entry and Design Guidelines with respect to Final Development Plans, all consistent with the Approved Plans.

Vision Development is a developer that wants to build an apartment community on land currently owned by Industrial Commercial Properties. The site plan approval on Monday was so this project can now move forward.

Mr. LaRose and Senior Vice President of Development Jeff Martin from Industrial Commercial Properties attended the meeting and answered questions.

Mr. Martin said he was fortunate to be paired with Vision on this project. He added that some people might be apprehensive about the inclusion of an apartment community, but there will be a mixture of different residential project types around Geauga Lake, and recreational amenities.

“Having diversity of this product will really bear fruits at the end of the day,” Mr. Martin said. “You’ll have different opportunities to live here in all facets of your life.”

Vision Development is working on developing in other areas relatively close to Geauga County within the next year or two, Mr. LaRose said.

Vision Development builds, manages and maintains a presence on all of its properties, Mr. LaRose said. That vertically integrative process is a differentiator between Vision and other developers who build and “hand their projects off,” he said.

When the conditions are met and the final plans for the apartment community are ready to be approved, at the trustees’ request, Mr. LaRose said he will attend another trustees meeting and give a presentation or conduct a special work session to spread community awareness about the project.

The site of the former Geauga Lake park is meaningful to many residents, including the trustees themselves, Trustee Jeff Markley said.

“Menard’s, a parking lot, an apartment complex doesn’t necessarily speak to the history of Geauga Lake,” Mr. Markley said, referring to the plans of the other occupants of the Geauga Lake parcel. “I have always wanted that to be something special, more than just asphalt and buildings. We expected Industrial Commercial Properties to contribute to that and the response was a 200-page document guiding us that way,” he said, referring to the 200-page site plan review document.

“Every applicant will be expected to provide some element of nostalgia in their plans,” Mr. Markley said.

In other business, trustees observed the swearing-in ceremony of new part-time police officer Richard Frangipane. He comes with 25 years of experience in the New York Police Department.

“His credentials are great and it’s going to be a great help for us, giving us insight,” Police Chief Jon Bokovitz said.

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