

The Capital

Developer to unveil mix of homes, stores in Deale

By E.B. FURGURSON III Staff Writer

An Annapolis-area developer hopes to turn the site of a Deale marina into a waterfront mix of adult housing, stores and medical offices, but said he won't build without community support.

Walter Petrie said he has reduced the size of the 22-acre project from the more than 400 homes on an early draft of the plan, but won't reveal the details until he meets with residents March 22.

But it will still include townhouses, independent-living units and other age-restricted residences along with a grocery store, bank, drugstore, medical building and other retailers between Rockhold Creek and Deale-Churchton Road.

The development could change the heart of Deale, now a hodgepodge of retail and marine businesses and open fields, into a destination retail center - a notion some say would be a much-needed shot in the arm, while others consider it the end of a sleepy waterside village.

"Everyone I have talked to thinks it is a positive project for our town," said Claire Mallicote, president of the Deale Merchants Association, who owns property across the road from the site and served on a hand-picked committee to shape the project. "It will bring the Small Area Plan into reality."

Ron Wolfe, who led the committee that wrote the planning blueprint for Deale and Shady Side, disagrees.

"It is out of whack" with the ideas set forth in the plan, he said. "There is simply too much density. We proposed a place to play, to put in boats, a park and a community center with small-scale retail."

Mr. Wolfe said many people like the small-town feel of mom-and-pop businesses.

"Deale is a great place," he said. "We like how it is now."

Mr. Petrie said he has trimmed the number of homes from the early plan, which has been circulated in the community.

"The residential density has been reduced significantly," said Mr. Petrie's potential partner in the project, Herrington Harbour marinas owner Stuart Chaney. He wouldn't say how much.

"We are looking at an independent, active-adult community ... where people can take advantage of the waterfront and other commercial services," Mr. Chaney said.

Mr. Petrie was worried people are judging the project based on the outdated version.

"They are not doing anyone any favors. Some people don't want anything to happen. They are just trying to stir up the pot and get everyone up in arms."

He said the real plan won't be available until the upcoming meeting.

"We are going to the community and asking what do you think? If you don't like it, I am out of here," he said.

"Well, maybe we will take a couple more steps," he added, hinting at room for adjustment.

South Arundel Citizens for Responsible Development, which led the fight to stop a Safeway shopping center nearby in Deale, has not taken a position on the plan.

"We have gotten phone calls and e-mails trying to figure out what is going on," said President Amanda Spake.

While what she has heard seems too large for the community, she did express interest in some of the components.

"There is a need for another grocery store, and 20,000 square feet is not bad."

To proceed Mr. Petrie will need to get zoning changes and contend with Critical Areas regulations. Current zoning has most of the commercial use toward the water with residential near the road. The plan, in general, flips that.

Mr. Petrie will unveil his proposal at a community meeting at Cedar Grove United Methodist Church, 5965 Deale -Churchton Road, at 7 p.m. March 22.

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