

The Capital

South County

Board backs plan for senior housing complex

By E.B. FURGURSON III, Staff Writer

The county Board of Appeals has backed plans for a senior housing complex in Churchton, forcing developers to decide whether to proceed now or to first concede to opponents' demands as a goodwill gesture.

The Board of Appeals on Tuesday allowed the grading permit for Crandell Cove Inc.'s 32-unit project off Franklin Manor Road to stand. It rejected South Arundel Citizens for Responsible Development's arguments that the developer should have exceeded the requirements for storm water management.

Phyllis Crandell Taylor, daughter of land donors John and Jewell Crandell and a member of Crandell Cove's board, said she wasn't sure whether it will begin grading.

"That is something our board will have to decide," she said. The earliest the body could meet is sometime next week.

Crandell Cove is the subject of another Board of Appeals hearing on Wednesday. Opponents will argue that the county administrative hearing officer didn't have the authority to allow an extension of the special exception and variances first granted to the project in 2003.

The special exception allows the project to be built in residential zoning, and the variances allow buildings to be constructed closer to property lines and a path to be built in the wetland buffer.

But that case could be settled: SACReD, facing defeat in both cases, offered a compromise.

In exchange for dropping its opposition, SACReD wants Crandell Cove to include some assisted living units, put trained medical people on site and offer more meal, personal or housekeeping service options.

At a public meeting organized by SACReD on Tuesday night, SACReD board member Michael Shay laid out its claims that:

The project was allowed under a nursing home designation, but is not providing any nursing type care;

Permitting multi-unit dwellings on property zoned for single-family homes is a dangerous precedent for the area's future

More modern stormwater management should be used.

"The community is giving up a lot and we should get some guarantee that our seniors will get services and the environment will be protected," Mr. Shay told the audience of about 80 at the Deale fire hall.

Mrs. Taylor responded by laying out the services they intend to provide for the 32 apartments including a continental breakfast and lunch, 24-hour security and emergency staff, transportation for doctor's appointments or shopping.

She also said personal care and or other services could be provided at additional cost.

"We are even looking at having a caterer deliver other meals for our tenants," she said.

SACReD member Sally Shivnan said she was "encouraged to hear" some of those services would be available, but the consensus among most of the crowd was that there's no guarantee any of those things would happen.

Andy Boyd, president of the Cape Anne Community Association, said his board

voted to oppose Crandell Cove until it sees some of the promises in writing.

Tom Heath, a former Deale Elementary PTA president who is on the Crandell Cove's board, stood to answer some of the questions from the audience.

"I don't know what the decision of the board will be. Will we decide to delay the project? I don't know. But we have no intention to delay getting together" to discuss possible common ground.

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