

The Capital Top Stories

Developer removes stores, offices from proposed complex

By DANIEL VALENTINE Staff Writer

Bowing to concerns from residents, an Annapolis developer has decided to remove all retail and office space from a controversial waterfront complex in Deale.

Walter Petrie said he also killed plans for non-senior housing at the 22-acre site after 400 people turned out at a March meeting, most of whom opposed the design.

"Too many people are against it," said Mr. Petrie, who plans to submit new designs to the county this fall.

The community at the site of Gates Marina will have only 70 to 80 units for seniors, Mr. Petrie said. He cut the 108 units that would have been open to all ages.

County officials and residents concerned about the impact on traffic and schools have insisted that new housing in the area be targeted to older residents.

"I don't want to fight City Hall," said Mr. Petrie, head of Petrie Ventures. "We're going to do pretty much what we were asked to do."

The reduction in the project's scope, the second since plans for a 400-unit waterfront village first passed around the rural maritime community early this year, comes as debate rages over development.

The Petrie Ventures project on the shore of Rockhold Creek would have included waterfront townhouses in addition to retail space for a grocery store, bank, drugstore, medical building and other retailers.

Currently, only a small, independent grocer serves the area.

A fight in 2000 over a proposal to build a Safeway grocery marked a watershed fight over development, where opponents prevailed. Since then, residents mobilized to draft new zoning for the Deale-Shady Side area that emphasizes slow growth.

"We lost that," said retail growth advocate Claire Mallicote, president of the Deale Merchants Association. "We need to encourage people to move, not just to live here, but to work. We need that commercial base."

Others disagree.

"The whole reason we came was we liked the feel of it here," said Kim Crabtree, who moved to the area from Montgomery County last year. "But a lot of people come with the mindset that they want to make it like where they lived before. Why?" Mr. Petrie's

waterfront project was perceived as a particular threat to the small community's character, said resident Ann Wolfe, chairman of the county chapter of the Sierra Club.

"People down here can't afford apartments. We do not want all this luxury stuff that will push people out of this town," Mrs. Wolfe said. "We're feeling overwhelmed. We're totally besieged, all the time."

Mrs. Wolfe and others want the land at the marina to remain accessible to the public, and prefer that Mr. Petrie build single-family homes at the site.

Anything more would lead to overdevelopment, they said.

"The way it usually unfolds, you build a large shopping center, then it brings more housing, then more people, then you need to widen the roads, and then there's more housing, and then you're in a suburb," Mrs. Crabtree said.

It is unclear whether the pending redesign will still include multilevel townhouses. Residents said they would still oppose the project if it does.

Ms. Mallicote said she's disappointed with the decision to scale back, but pleased that senior housing is still being planned for the marina.

"It was a well-thought-out plan that had things the community needed," she said. "(Deale) needs to be spruced up. It will make us a stronger, more viable community."

Mr. Petrie also plans to redevelop a shopping center on Mayo Road in Edgewater. Plans submitted to the county call for replacing the facade on the existing buildings and building a bank at the center. It is now home to a Safeway that is relocating to a new plaza nearby at Route 214 and Pike Ridge Road.

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