



Crestwood development gets green light by zoning board

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A vote by the Tuckahoe Zoning Board last week gave the thumbs up to a proposed mixed-use development in Crestwood that has undergone several transformations while navigating the village's land use boards over the past two years.

In a 3-1 vote on Feb. 8, the zoning board approved a resolution granting four variances and a special use permit pertaining to a development application at 300-308 Columbus Ave.

currently slated to include 43 studio units – four one-bedroom dwellings and 3,600 sq. ft. of commercial space. The site is currently home to two defunct gas stations.

Board Chairman Ron Gallo was joined by commissioners Steve Alfasi and Nicholas DiSalvo in voting for the accommodations, while Commissioner John Palladino opposed the variances. Commissioner David Kubaska was absent from the vote.



Although a prior applicant successfully petitioned the Tuckahoe Board of Trustees in 2010 to place the site within the village's business/residential district, village code still requires any development to get a special permit in order to include residential dwellings.

The board also awarded variances allowing the applicant to exceed the village's 42-foot height requirement by 3.9 feet and to include a fourth story in the building. The board cut the developer's parking space obligation nearly in half – allowing 61 spaces, where the village requires 112 – and reducing the width requirement for 36 of the spaces from 9 feet to 8.5 feet.

The fourth story granted by the zoning board would provide for a below-grade parking level on the site.

When the adjoining lots were before the village Board of Trustees in 2010, the applicant was Crestwood Station Plaza, LLC, which was proposing a building with the same 3,600 sq. ft. of commercial space on its ground floor, but with 21 two-bedroom and five one-bedroom dwellings on its upper two stories.

At the time, residents of the Eastchester School District – which serves the Crestwood section of Tuckahoe – came out to express their concern about the potential influx of additional schoolchildren from the project, particularly related to the two-bedroom apartments.



But back in September, a new applicant called Street-Works Development, LLC – which has entered into a contract of sale with Crestwood Station Plaza for the property – came before the Tuckahoe Planning Board with a new proposal of 49 studio units to replace the 26 larger apartments in the original plan.

Based on feedback from that board, the plan morphed later in the fall to a 44-unit layout including 37 studios, four one-bedroom apartments and three two-bedroom dwellings, prior to settling in January on the 47-dwelling proposal reviewed by the zoning board.

Attorney Robert Davis, who represented Crestwood Station Plaza before the Board of Trustees and is currently representing Street-Works, emphasized that the original applicant was under no obligation to adhere to the 26-unit model it discussed when seeking a zoning change from the village. “That was just presented to them for illustrative purposes,” said Davis.

However, he noted that the special permit and variances approved last week are conditional on the applicant maintaining the current breakdown of dwelling units and commercial space. The applicant must also adhere to its stated plans not to include food service, which could require greater parking needs, within its commercial component.

Tracey Schiavone, who lives on Fisher Avenue diagonally across from the project sitem opposed the village government’s vote to rezone the property. She expressed her disgust with the zoning board’s support of the plan articulated by the developer.

“The chairman made up his mind at the very first,” she said. “He’s been the best spokesperson for the applicant...We live there every day, but our opinions mean nothing.”

In voting against the set of variances, Commissioner Palladino said that the applicant had shown “very little attempt at compromise” and noted that the Tuckahoe Planning Board had recommended against granting them.

However, Gallo, the chair, discussed what he believed would be strong tax benefits for the Village of Tuckahoe and the Eastchester School District, noting the lack of added school children projected in the new proposal – an issue that has been a sticking point with opponents to a proposed Glenmark/Raffiani development on Main Street.

“I, as a zoning board member, would look for any application to come in neutral...This application is cash-positive for the schools,” Gallo said.

The applicant will now resume the site plan review process before the Tuckahoe Planning Board. The project was expected to be discussed at Wednesday evening’s planning board meeting, scheduled for after press time.