

Homes project finally okayed

**City gives
its blessing to
Crosswinds
workforce housing**

By DIANA LADDEN

HUDSON—After numerous delays, the Crosswinds at Hudson Workforce Housing project was scheduled to receive final approval from the city Planning Commission, Thursday, March 8.

The developer will close on the financing for the project next week and plans to begin work on the 70-unit, \$12.8-million affordable housing project as soon as possible.

The project has experienced its share of roadblocks along the way to final approval. "I was in shock when I found out the project wasn't just moving along," said Hudson Mayor Richard Tracy this week. "I thought everything was settled in

Continued on page 12

Homes project

Continued from page 1

June when the project got the okay from the Planning Board."

To get the project back on track, the mayor says he made calls and wrote letters, as did city Planning Commission Chairman Robert Perry.

Water and sewer issues caused the latest delay. City officials were worried that storm water runoff from nearby Michael Court combined with the outflow from Crosswinds might overwhelm the city's sewer system, causing untreated water to flow into the Hudson River.

The city also wanted to know who would pay to remedy that problem.

And then there was the question raised by construction of a 12-inch water line serving the new buildings at the Firemen's Home. The paperwork for that part of the nursing home project makes the city the owner of the new line, with an easement guaranteeing access by the Firemen's Home.

Still other questions that surfaced during the delay involved technical requirements and communication breakdowns between officials and 3D Development, developers of the Crosswinds project.

City Department of Public Works Commissioner Michael O'Hara this week attributed the delays caused by the new pipe at the Firemen's Home to 3D Development, which he said did not provide test results to the city until early last December.

That delay, he said, was not under DPW control, and the original plan called for documents proving that there would be adequate pressure for water and for fire hydrants.

Bruce Levine, principal of 3D, said Thursday that the city made

additional requests of his project even after he and city planners had agreed on the requirements for the project.

"After we responded to the Planning Commission's conditions of approval, the new DPW superintendent determined that the data we used, which was generated by the Fireman's Home and provided to us by DPW, was not acceptable since it was created by the engineers for the Fireman's Home and not the city," said Mr. Levine.

Meantime, the city bureaucrats were having troubles communicating among themselves. Mr. O'Hara said that the morning after Crosswinds received a crucial approval from the Planning Commission, former DPW Superintendent

Charles Butterworth called him and put an engineer on the phone who described his concerns about the storm water overflow at Michael Court.

That situation has now been resolved, said Mr. O'Hara. "Fortunately the state agreed to pick up the tab, because I would have had to confront [Mr. Levine] and ask him to pay for something that was not his fault; he was simply the last person to hook onto the line."

The whole mess became more confusing when Mr. O'Hara received a letter last month from Planning Commission Chairman Robert Perry demanding to know why the DPW had not responded to questions from the commission and taking the DPW to task for not becoming involved in the review of the Crosswinds project.

"He could not possibly know about the secrecy that often shrouded communications to the DPW," Mr. O'Hara said this week.

"We would have gladly worked with the Planning Commission to map out a procedure to make sure

we were not working at cross purposes," said Mr. O'Hara. He acknowledged that there been a good deal of miscommunication throughout the project and that he hoped this could be remedied in the future. But he said, "The city has no established procedure for this, so far."

Mr. Perry agrees that the level of miscommunication was unfortunate. "Everything we asked Crosswinds to do, they did—soil samples, changing the orientation of the buildings and the streets—they were willing to work with us," he said.

He added that he is happy that the project can now proceed.

Mr. Levine didn't dwell on the past this week. "I am glad that everyone involved worked together to arrive at a solution that was acceptable and would allow the project to proceed toward construction," he said. "I am excited that I can now begin construction on Hudson's first affordable workforce housing."

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Michael O'Hara, commissioner, Hudson Dept. of Public Works