

Same people proposing Hopatcong development!

SAME DEVELOPER

Bonds for WW development's landscaping reduced
By: Shanay Cadette , Staff Writer 10/01/2004
Village Grande residents say project is lagging.

WEST WINDSOR – The developer of Village Grande at Bear Creek was in the hot seat again Monday, but the Township Council still granted D.R. Horton's request to reduce the performance guarantee bonds that cover landscaping in the development despite resident complaints.

Concerns about the quality of pavement and concrete work, sinkholes and drainage were the big issues in August when numerous residents accused D.R. Horton of shoddy workmanship. After a four-hour meeting at that August session, the Township Council agreed to reduce several outstanding bonds and cash posted for sections of the age-restricted development, noting more than enough bond money would be left to repair current problems at the Old Trenton Road development.

Performance guarantee bonds and cash are posted to protect the township in case a developer leaves a project unfinished. As a development nears completion, the developer typically asks that portions of the bond be returned.

On Monday, residents complained about dead trees and other landscaping problems, but township landscape architect Dan Dobromilsky said the requested reductions were reasonable and conservative.

The bonds in question cover the landscaping in four sections of the development. The requested reductions brought the percentages retained down to anywhere between 30 to 57 percent for the different sections. Mr. Dobromilsky explained less is being withheld from earlier phases in the development because more work has been completed in those sections. Areas in the later phases are deficient, he said, but the bond money left after the reductions would still cover lingering problems.

"I feel very comfortable to say there's sufficient money to cover it if we need it," Mr. Dobromilsky said.

Residents told the council the landscaping design for the development includes thousands of trees, shrubs, flowers and other greenery.

"It is something, if it comes to fruition, we can all be proud of," said Paul Pitluk of Rainflower Lane.

Yet those plans have not been implemented, residents complained. Some of the greenery was never planted, they said, while much of the greenery that has been planted is dead or was planted improperly and had not been replaced.

"We have seen over and over again trees lying there horizontal," Mr. Pitluk said.

Several residents also contend the developer is taking too long to complete the landscaping work, and urged the township to push the developer to finish it in a timely manner.

"I think it can be done by spring," Mr. Dobromilsky said about the landscaping work. "I think they can get all five (phases) done."

But representatives from D.R. Horton explained the landscaping is being planted in numerical order and will take time to complete.