

# Stanhope may sewer

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## Hopatcong project

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Hearings on a proposed large senior housing development in Hopatcong — which has been reduced about 20 percent from its original size— continue to be postponed as the developer readies its engineering plan.

Developer DR Horton, of Freehold, made what could be a significant gain in furthering the project on Tuesday when the Stanhope Borough Council agreed to start negotiations with the developer to sell the borough's extra sewer capacity. The potential 100,000 gallons of sewer capacity from Stanhope would provide most of what would be needed for the proposed 662 senior housing units, said Peter Lijoi, the vice president for land acquisition for DR Horton in New Jersey.

The developer plans to ask for an extension at Tuesday's

**WHAT: Village Grande at Hopatcong.**

**THE NEXT STEP: The developer will ask the Borough Planning Board for an extension on Tuesday.**

Hopatcong Planning Board meeting, which would be the third consecutive extension for the project. Lijoi said the extensions and the reduction in the number of housing units are to accommodate the significant feedback on the project. The proposed development off Sparta-Stanhope Road was originally 834 units when submitted to the borough in March.

In addition to its sewerage plan,

the developer is also solidifying its water supply plan, Lijoi said. With insufficient water on site, or available through the borough, the developer has had to look outside Hopatcong for potential water sources, Lijoi said. Along with Stanhope, the developer has reached out to Byram, Roxbury and private owners to seek water and sewer resources.

Hopatcong Mayor Richard Hodson, a member of the borough Planning Board, said he believes the unfinished water and sewer plans are the holdup for the developer. He said those plans will weigh heavily in the board's consideration of the project.

"Until they resolve sewer and water and what the layout is going to be ... the board is still waiting for what I think the key presentation will be," Hodson said Wednesday.

The developer has maintained

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its same general layout design for the mix of single-family homes, townhouses and garden apartments, while increasing the buffers between the adjacent residential areas by decreasing the number of units, Lijoi said. Building on steep slopes has also been reduced, he said.

The reductions were made in a revised plan submitted to the borough on Nov. 19. The developer is also reviewing an option to make the pro-

posed development's second entrance on Durban Avenue an emergency-only entrance, Lijoi said. The entrance has been a point of contention for some area residents as it would be near three of the borough's schools.

An active citizens' group has formed in opposition to the proposed development, fearing increased traffic, impact on borough services and effect on the environment. The group's latest concern is the potential deal between the developer and Stanhope for sewer capacity, said Hopatcong resident Michael Nowell, a group leader.

"They may very well hold the key if this development goes in," Nowell said

of the Stanhope officials. He said the group plans to engage Stanhope residents in their fight against the development.

Stanhope Councilman Brian Murphy said Wednesday that borough officials will only agree to the sale of excess sewer capacity if it is beneficial to borough residents. The borough has determined it has 100,000 gallons of extra sewer capacity, he said.

That amount would be the majority needed to support the 662 housing units, Lijoi said. The remaining needed sewer capacity of 23,000 gallons could be built on the site or purchased elsewhere, he said.

Roxbury Township Manager Christopher Raths said Wednesday that the township does not have extra water availability and likely does not have extra sewer capacity.

Byram Township Manager Gregory Poff did not return a call for comment Wednesday.

At November's Hopatcong Planning Board meeting, the board agreed to hire its own professionals to investigate the traffic, services and environmental impact of the proposed development, Hodson said. That measure was requested by the residents, officials said.