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The Long-Islander



LONG ISLANDER NEWSPAPERS

TELECOMMUNICATIONS/MEDIA BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

VOLUME 171, ISSUE 51

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2011

HUNTINGTON

Kensington Estates Approved

*Board votes 3-2 to
OK 80 luxury
senior homes*

By Danny Schrafel

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Huntington's town board gave the green light Tuesday for Triangle Equities to develop a controversial 18.6-acre Huntington ranch into 80 age-restricted senior homes.

The 3-2 majority, formed by council members Susan Berland, Glenda Jackson and Mark Mayoka, approved Kensington Estates, a 55-and-over gated luxury attached-townhouse community Jan. 11.

"It's very nice that we got the three votes we needed to get Kensington rolling, something the community needs and desires. I think we'll do a great job," Triangle Equities President Lester Petracca said after the vote.

First proposed in 2007, plans include 14 townhomes on 3.72 acres in the Oyster Bay hamlet of Woodbury, 66 homes on 13.5 acres in Huntington and three single-family homes on Woodbury Road on 1.37 acres. The gated community is to include amenities like a clubhouse, swimming pool, a library and tennis courts.

Huntington resident John Terrana said the project would have a modest traffic impact, be tax-positive for area schools and provide housing options for a growing market. Being located on Jericho Turnpike would buffer nearby residential communities and not set a

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Kensington housing development approved

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precedent for developing higher-density communities in residential areas, while once and for all cleaning up "the mess" that currently occupies the property — the Indian Head Ranch, whose owners have butted heads with Town Hall for years over code violations and uses for the property.

"It's a good proposal — it's for senior housing. We need senior housing," Huntington resident John Terrana, who lives directly behind the Dougal property, said.

Supervisor Frank Petrone, who voted against the proposal with Councilman Mark Cuthbertson, argued there wasn't enough community outreach by Triangle Equities and that his colleagues, in focusing on senior housing, missed the larger point.

"What we neglected to understand is that we just rewarded a property owner who broke every law and everything in the town code," Petrone said. "They got their price, they got their money... they're walking away with a great value on a property they abused and the people around them that they totally abused."

The Cold Spring Civic Association chairwoman Gayle Snyder, speaking prior to the vote, argued that Kensington weakens the town's master plan and flouts groundwater protection rules while stacking the deck in favor of future high-density proposals.

"This site is just one of several sites in the area that has the potential for development, such as the Cold Spring Country Club and Woodbury Country Club," she said. "By steamrolling over the [town's] comprehensive plan's vision for such parcels and allowing this dense development to occur sets a bad precedent, since future applications will similarly argue the comprehensive plan should not be followed."

She also argued the proposal does not meet town's affordable housing hurdles. Town code requires 20 percent of high-density developments to be income-restricted affordable housing. According to the proposal, 10 percent of Kensington Estates' units will be affordable and Triangle will pay into the Town of Huntington's Affordable Housing Trust

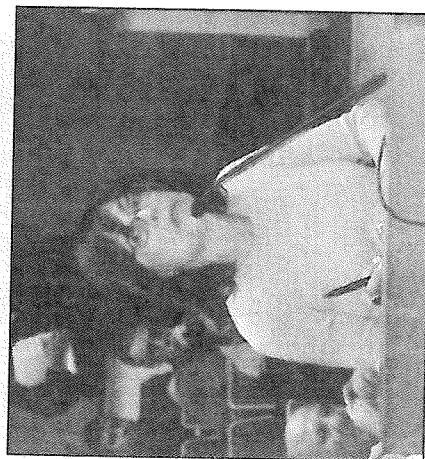
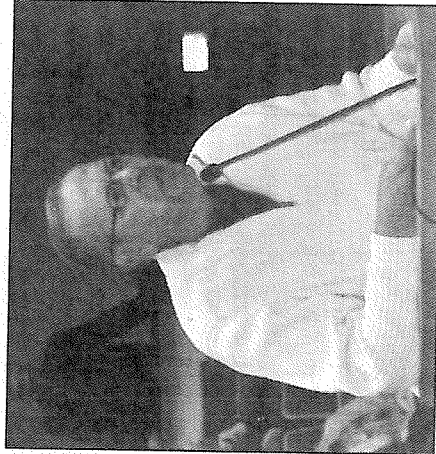
Fund to cover the balance of the mandate.

Committee member Cynthia Hemley, argued the town must enact its zoning ordinances according to its master plan "in order to prevent impermissible, ad hoc, discriminatory spot zoning." She added that ridding a community of an eyesore is sufficient to step outside the

master plan.

Nevertheless, Huntington's Michael DeCristofaro, who has lived in Huntington for 49 years with his wife, said he and his neighbors who live nearest to the property strongly support it.

"It will have a most positive effect enhancing our community," he said.



Kensington Estates supporter Michael DeCristofaro of Huntington, top, and opponent Gayle Snyder, who chairs the Cold Spring Hills Civic Association, make their final push before the Huntington Town Board's vote Tuesday.

Long-Islander photos/Danny Schrafel