

Residents turn out to oppose project

By: **CHRISTOPHER RUVO** (Wed, Nov/22/2006)

"Green not greed!"

That's what more than 100 Tinicum residents gathered in the cold outside the municipal building Tuesday night chanted as a developer entered to discuss a large-scale development plan.

Carrying signs that read "Save the Environment" and "Save Our Water," the crowd made its message clear.

Residents don't want big build-up in their rural Upper Bucks township which borders the Delaware River. In an attempt to compromise, a partnership between the Piper Group and Main Street Developers presented a scaled-down development plan that calls for more open space.

Originally, the partnership hoped to build more than 550 units of apartments, single-family homes and townhouses on several neighboring properties along Route 611 and Durham Road, said Robert Gundlach, who represents the developers.

Now, the partnership is proposing just less than 200 units of townhouses and single-family homes, he said.

It plans to consolidate the build-up on two properties and dedicate a 20-acre property to the township for recreation. A potential park, which preliminary plans showed as having soccer and baseball fields, had been slated for development.

But some residents at the standing-room-only meeting cackled and heckled when the plan was unveiled.

Some are particularly concerned that the development's water needs will dry out their wells. "If my well goes dry, are any of you going to help me get a new one?" resident Ron Tater asked.

The developer's hydrogeologist, Jeff Clark, said his client is obligated to help with well replacement. He said a full study on the impact on neighboring wells hasn't been completed yet.

Another major concern is that the development will pollute the Tohickon Creek. A proposed sewage treatment plant will ultimately discharge there.

Some worried that even if the treatment discharges clean water you can fish in, heavy rain could cause the plant to overflow, leading to polluted water getting into the creek.

The developers also proposed turning control of the plant, which officials said would process 49,000 gallons daily, to the township.

But with tongue in cheek, Greg Czura said that just means "taxpayers will get the benefit of maintaining the plant."

Increased traffic from the development is another concern. A traffic light is proposed, which caused Nick Domiano to ask, "Is it going to take an hour to get to Doylestown now?"

Paying to educate a larger student body in the Palisades School District had others concerned too.

"We can't afford \$78 million for a new school," said one woman.

Gundlach said the scaled-down plan showed an effort on the developer's part to reduce impact on the school.

Township engineer Tom Fountain said it would likely be a while before supervisors made a decision.

"We could have a 40-page report of comments they'll need to address," he said.

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