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NEW PLAN UNVEILED AT NASSAU
OCEAN ATLANTIC ADDS COMMERCIAL CENTER
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By Jim Cresson

A revised Vineyard at Nassau Valley plan adding a strong main street retail business element to the 984-home residential planned community is winning rave reviews from state planners.

The new plan will be submitted to the county for a 30-day subdivision review later this month. Groundbreaking is expected in the summer of 2005, with completion of the first of several phases by mid-2006.

In a Feb. 4 unveiling of the plan, Ocean Atlantic Associates' Wendy Baker and Stephen Schwartz explained that the Vineyard Communities LLC revised plan better enhances smart growth principals and the goals of Livable Delaware than did the original plan, which received county approval last year.

"We realized with the first plan that it was not much more than a big residential community, not really conforming to the Livable Delaware goals," said Schwartz.

"Now we've revised the plan and gone from 6,000 square feet of retail commercial space to 183,000 square feet of commercial space."

Schwartz and Baker said the change makes Ocean Atlantic Associates' Vineyard plan "more of a lifestyle community with a main street element of commercial use that offers all the benefits of a city, without city hassles."

To achieve the desired high quality main street element in their plan, Ocean Atlantic Associates went to Charlotte, N.C. and visited Birkdale Village developed by Peter Pappas. The new Vineyards plan reflects much of what Pappas used in his Birkdale main street commercial element. Pappas is considering an offer to join Ocean Atlantic Associates in the Vineyard project, he likes the new plan so well, said Baker

The main street element will be incorporated into the community, with both Route 9 entrances leading into the commercial area.

"This plan seeks to create a sense of place and an environment that is less focused and dependent on the automobile," said Schwartz. "The new design will create an active, distinctive, pedestrian-friendly environment while still preserving open space, natural beauty and the architectural styles of the existing vineyard."

Among the key features of the plan are a vertical mixing of uses in the main street area with a major grocery store, retail shops and offices on the street level, topped by two, three and four stories of residential condominiums.

An existing pond on the site will be bulkheaded, bordered by a boardwalk and surround by open space to give an amenity that residents and visitors alike can enjoy. A community center will be open to all and will include a wellness center above it. Pedestrians can stroll along the lakeside promenade served by a variety of locally based

restaurants. Streets will be side walked and lighted, encouraging residents and visitors to park their cars in one of the three large parking garages and to walk around the community.

Residential development surrounding the main street element will consist of 482 homes in 63 mansion-like buildings containing six, eight, or 10 units. Schwartz and Baker said this new plan is a prime example of smart growth and mixed use communities. "Livable Delaware promotes mixed use designs as part of its overall vision," said Schwartz.

To view a conceptual drawing of the new plan, see page 12.

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