

Cumberland condos would require zoning change

By Eric Veronikis

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The owners of [Liberty Forge](#) golf course in [Lower Allen Township](#) want to develop high-end condominiums on the course, or have another developer build them.

Lower Allen Township-based LFGC Inc. would have to get a zoning change from the township to move ahead with the project on the approximately 100-acre Cumberland County property.

The golf course is adjacent to Lisburn Road and is zoned rural residential. No more than one dwelling is permitted per acre. LFGC has suggested an amendment that would permit up to five or six buildings per acre. But it would also require the group to keep 50 percent of the property open, said Thomas Vernau, township manager.

The project could include the development of up to 18 four-level buildings in the next eight to 10 years, said Luke Grumbine, LFGC president.

The township commissioners did not set a timeline for a vote following last night's public hearing on the project.

Vernau said 75 percent of the approximate 200 people that attended the hearing were against the development. Many in attendance said the project would degrade one of the last rural areas in the township and would increase traffic along Lisburn Road, Vernau said.

Under current zoning, the developer could put together a different project that would be worse for the area, he said.

"Someone could come in and carve it up into 95 (residential) lots. That to me is not preserving the rural character," Vernau said.

The condominiums would be for seniors ages 55 and over. Prices would start at \$400,000 and the average condo would cost \$600,000, Grumbine said.

The smallest units would be about 900 square feet. Grumbine would not give an approximate size for medium to larger condos because it depends on what the market calls for, he said.

"We might hit a market that wants all two bedrooms. It's hard to say until you get into the market," Grumbine said. "There is nothing in the area like this."

All the buildings would have underground parking and the golf course would stay; even though it would be altered to accommodate the project, Grumbine said.

LFGC wants to reopen its restaurant at the golf course as an amenity to the condominiums. In January of 2006, Liberty Forge shut down its restaurant, where it [Hosted Weddings And Other Events](#).

Board of Commissioners President John T. Titzel has received e-mails, phone calls and letters from residents about the plan.

Some residents are for the project because it would help increase the township's tax base.

"As chairman of the board I want to remain neutral. Of course, any individual would have feelings (about it) way or the other," Titzel said.

If the zoning change is approved, it would take a year or two after the change is adopted before the first building would be ready for occupancy, Grumbine said. It would take time to get water out to the building sites and finish planning, he said.

The developer would build the condominium buildings as it sells them, Grumbine said. There could be up to eight units per floor. The buildings would rise 60 to 75 feet, he said.