

Developers withdraw proposal for 172-unit apartment complex on Route 83 in Ellington

By Josh Silvia

Journal Inquirer

ELLINGTON — The nearly 40 residents who attended Monday's Planning and Zoning Commission meeting were pleased with developer Matthew Chapman's decision to withdraw his application to build 172 apartments off Route 83.

PZC Chairman Arlo Hoffman read aloud an April 21 letter from Chapman, saying his application for the apartments had been withdrawn. The PZC then unanimously approved a motion to accept the withdrawal of the apartment application.

"In the past, when we have seen an applicant withdraw an application after a lot of public comment it means they listened," Hoffman told residents who attended the PZC meeting in the Center School gymnasium.

Hoffman referred to the four-month application process during which nearly 160 residents attended a public hearing to voice their disapproval of the proposed development.

Hoffman said the application is dead right now, but the developers could come back with another proposal.

"If that does happen then they'll have to send notices to the abutters again," he said of the developers.

Chapman, the grandson of well-known developer Gardner Chapman, was seeking to build 22 buildings that would house 172 apartment units on 35 acres off Route 83. Gardner Chapman also was involved with the project because he has owned the property for almost 50 years.

The property was close to Autumn Chase, a 55-acre apartment complex built in the late 1990s by

Gardner Chapman.

Before the Chapmans could have built on the property, they had to convince the PZC to approve a zone change from commercial and residential to multifamily.

The Chapmans and their Vernon lawyer, Dorian Famiglietti, did not attend the meeting Monday and could not be reached for comment today.

Louis Corsino, 34, a resident who represented a group of 65 neighbors opposed to the zone change, said the withdrawal was "good news."

However, he said the application wasn't rejected and the Chapmans could come back with another proposal.

"We have to make sure we keep on top of the meetings," Corsino said of the possibility of the application resurfacing.

Corsino added that during the application process members of the community came together and helped any way they could. "They helped by donating money and putting out fliers," he said.

Residents opposed the development because of the possibility of increased traffic on Route 83, a rapid growth in population, and it would have taken away land used for agriculture.

Famiglietti, however, had said the development would have stimulated the economy with new construction and jobs.

She also had noted the developers were preparing to make a \$12 million to \$18 million investment in town. And the developers were confident the apartments would have been rented due to an improving real estate market, and would have been a heavily taxable property.