

PLANNING BOARD

Developer: 'desperate need' for special needs housing

BY REBECCA GREENE
Correspondent

WYCKOFF - The president of Bergen County United Way told the Planning Board on Oct. 5 that "there is a desperate need" in the area for special needs housing, and the organization, in conjunction with Madeline Housing Partners, want to do their part to help meet it.

The nonprofits have submitted an application to build that housing at 370 Clinton Ave., a parcel owned by the township that they plan to buy for \$300,000.

They are proposing a facility with a four-unit shared residence, two two-bedroom units and one studio apartment. It would accommodate nine residents.

The nonprofits are seeking zoning relief for the studio apartment, which would be 511 square feet where 600 square feet is required; and for parking spaces of 9 feet by 18 feet where 10 feet by 20 feet is required.

"This is a 100 percent affordable housing group home," Thomas Toronto, president of Bergen County United Way, told the board. "This is specifically for individuals with developmental disabilities and will serve a broad range of folks under that definition."

Rent per person is estimated at \$500 per month.

Statewide, 8,000 people 21 years old and over are seeking such supportive housing, Toronto said.

"In this area, there is a desperate need for it," he said.

Toronto said parents with children with developmental challenges have one major concern: What will happen to my child when I'm not here anymore?

"This housing is an answer to this need," he said.

Individuals who rent would be eligible for various services and would receive them on a continuing basis, he said. In some cases, Toronto said, the United Way oversees the facilitation of those services.

Toronto said that nearby communities, including Ramsey and Mahwah, have "embraced" such housing.

Hearings on the proposal are expected to continue on Nov. 9.

