

GOVERNMENT

Council to purchase site for affordable housing

BY MARC LIGHTDALE
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TENAFLY — The borough entered into an agreement to purchase the property on 311 Tenafly Road for \$999,000, and in turn deed the land to Bergen County's United Way for the construction of special needs housing.

"The deed will require that [the United Way] can only use the property to build the special need housing," Councilman Mark Zinna said following the Feb. 26 mayor and council meeting. "The deal provisions passed unanimously, we're waiting to review the language with the attorneys [to make sure] it satisfied the deed restrictions."

The proposed building will go toward satisfying the borough's Council on Affordable Housing requirements.

Tom Toronto, president of the Bergen County United Way first presented the idea for this development at a council meeting in April 2012. The six-unit building, with 10 bedrooms, is expected to be constructed on the 6,000 square-foot property and required Department of Environmental Protection approval because of its close proximity to the Tenakill Brook.

The council passed a resolution memorializing the agreement with the final details still being worked out by the attorneys, officials said. The United Way will build the facility with rentals for those people with special needs who want to live independently.

Zinna said each borough maintains its own Council on Affordable Housing Regulations [COAH] and a trust fund composed of developer's fees from the town, and there is close to \$2 million in Tenafly's. Special needs housing is one of the ways towns can satisfy COAH requirements.

For these 10 units, it is a 2-to-1 deal, Zinna said, as the borough would garner 20 credits for the 10 units.

"Because it is special needs housing, we get double the credits," Zinna said.

Zinna said the owners of the property had wanted to put a multi-family structure there but were denied the permissions they needed by the DEP. This new deal with the United Way is sanctioned by the DEP.

"I'm fully supportive of this, it gives huge benefits to us for COAH," Zinna said.

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