

Timetable set for new homes for the disabled

Tenafly eyes fall 2014 opening

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TENAFLY — The borough may have special-needs housing as early as next fall.

This comes after the council voted to deed 311 Tenafly Road to Bergen County United Way/Made-line Partnership, a non-profit that builds housing for disabled and low-income residents across New Jersey.

The borough has been in discussion for months with United Way, which has already built or is working on 30 projects in other communities, including Ramsey, Allendale, Fairview and Demarest.

"This will help us serve a very under-served segment of the community," said Mayor Peter Rustin. The project will also benefit the borough by helping it meet the state requirement to promote low- and moderate-income housing, he said.

The next step will be to have the real estate closing and then for United Way to prepare a site plan application to present to the Tenafly Planning Board this fall. If all goes well, construction could begin in early 2014, with a possible opening in autumn 2014.

United Way also has to acquire the financing to build the project.

"We have made a com-

mitment to the borough that the deal is not contingent on financing," said Tom Toronto, president of Bergen County United Way. "We are confident we will be successful in securing financing. Tenafly is a great community for this project. We have already made applications to the state for funding."

Tenafly purchased the property on Tenafly Road in January for \$999,000, using funds from the state Council on Affordable Housing. The project has already received land use and environmental approvals.

When construction is nearly completed, applications will be made available on the United Housing website and at Tenafly Borough Hall. Preference will be given to Tenafly residents with a diagnosed developmental disability who have the ability to live safely in an independent residential setting, Toronto said.

Construction of the 10-bedroom project — a one-story facility whose design will blend in with the community — will cost approximately \$900,000, Toronto said.

Mary Meyer, coordinator of the Adult Issues North chapter of the Asperger Autism Spectrum Education Network, said she was delighted with Tenafly's decision to provide affordable housing for the disabled.

"I applaud Mayor Rustin and the council for understanding that need," she said.

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