

City & Region

West Seneca board moves ahead with housing project to serve those with mental illness

By Janice Habuda | News Staff Reporter | Google+

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A proposal to build housing for the mentally ill in the town of West Seneca took its first official step Monday night, when a request for a height variance was forwarded by the Town Board to the Planning Board.

The structure under consideration by DePaul Properties would reach 54 feet in height in one place, with most of the remaining roof peaks topping out at 46 feet. A variance is required for anything taller than 40 feet.

The request was made in a Jan. 23 letter from Parrone Engineering of East Rochester, on behalf of DePaul, a Rochester-based, nonprofit organization that serves people with special needs. A representative of DePaul Properties gave an overview of the estimated \$20 million project at a Town Board work session earlier this month.

The proposed site for the three-story apartment complex is 2,400 Seneca St., which houses a vacant 124,000-square-foot building that had been used by various department store chains since it was built in the 1960s. Plans call for demolishing the building and constructing a 35,000-square-foot building that would have 75 single-occupancy studio apartments and 25 units of "workforce housing" for people earning less than \$27,000 a year.

Case managers would be on site to help residents coping with mental illness, a DePaul representative said earlier this month, and all residents would face background checks.

Though the developer has yet to meet with neighbors of the proposed site, Linda Toy of Burch Avenue, which is one of the streets bordering it, said the project's scale isn't right for the neighborhood of small homes.

"I think that thing is totally out of character," Toy said. "Three stories and then you're getting another big roof."

DePaul doesn't own the site yet, and numerous other approvals are needed from the Town and Planning boards before the project can proceed.

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CALENDAR

West Seneca Events

- Tue. 1/28: "Historic Ebenezer exhibit,"
- Tue. 1/28: West Seneca Historical Society Museum
- Tue. 1/28: "Organic Metamorphosis,"
- Tue. 1/28: Firemen's Memorial Exhibit Center of Western New York
- Thu. 1/30: tableside magic with Mike Seeger
- Fri. 1/31: Jack Russell's Great White
- Fri. 1/31: Double Shot
- Fri. 1/31: Speedy Parker Blues Band
- Fri. 1/31: Supercharger
- Fri. 1/31: open mic with the Key Witness Band

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