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NEWS

Vindy Basic

Developer forges ahead with 'lifestyle community'

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The project could create 650 jobs, a developer says.

By [IAN HILL](#)

VINDICATOR STAFF WRITER

CANFIELD — A local developer is moving ahead with plans to create Mahoning County's first "lifestyle community," a development with stores, offices, homes, a golf course and a supermarket.

Charles Whitman, president of C.T.W. Development Corporation in Boardman, has started construction on the Westford Centre development on U.S. Route 224 near Summit Drive in Canfield Township.

The privately funded, \$186 million development is slated to include about 200 single-family homes; 200 condominiums and villas; a supermarket; 15 to 20 stores; an 18-hole, par-71 golf course; a 150-room hotel and conference center; an outpatient surgery center; an assisted-living facility for seniors; and four office buildings.

"This is a unique development to this area," said Mike O'Shaughnessy, director of the Mahoning County Planning Commission. O'Shaughnessy said he thinks it is the first time plans for a development in the county have included stores, homes and a golf course.

Private funding secured

Whitman called Westford Centre "almost a community in itself," and added that he has secured the private funding needed to build the development. That includes money to construct buildings, power lines and sewer lines.

Water will be supplied by a \$1.4 million waterline paid for by Whitman, other developers, property owners, Consumers Ohio Water Co., a state Issue 2 grant and the Mahoning County sales tax. The last phase of the waterline is set to be constructed this spring.

When complete, the waterline will run from Summit Drive along Route 224 and Tippecanoe Road to Western Reserve Road. County Sanitary Engineer Joe Warino noted that it will also provide water for property owners on Western Reserve and Tippecanoe roads, Summit Drive and Route 224.

Whitman added that many of the roads that he builds for the development will be given to the township, including a road that will connect South Raccoon Road with what is now the dead end of Summit Drive.

Building has begun

Construction has started on the Kennsington Golf Club's course as well as the development's infrastructure. The outpatient surgery center is expected to open later this month or early in May, Whitman added. Two of the office buildings also have been

completed.

The homes are slated to be a minimum of 2,400 square feet and cost about \$275,000. Reservations are being taken for the housing lots, which will be available for construction in June, Whitman continued.

He said many of the lots on the development's east side have been reserved.

In a presentation given at a recent Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber breakfast, Whitman described Westford Centre as a "lifestyle community," a term some developers have used to describe projects that include golf courses, community centers and upscale homes.

The term may have derived from "lifestyle center," which is an open-air mall designed to have upscale stores in an environment that emulates Main Street America.

Examples of lifestyle centers in Ohio include Legacy Village near Cleveland and Easton Town Center in Columbus.

Talking with stores

Whitman said he was in negotiations with several stores and a supermarket interested in Westford Centre. He wouldn't identify the stores or supermarket, but he said he was looking to attract upscale merchants such as Banana Republic and J. Crew.

Mike Wilson, executive director of the Homebuilders Remodelers Association of the Mahoning Valley, said lifestyle communities give residents the convenience of being able to shop close to home. He noted that his association has been discussing the possibility of having a lifestyle community built in the area for the past several years.

"In metropolitan areas, it's worked very well," Wilson said.

Whitman added the development could create 650 jobs and relocate 250 jobs to the township. It also could generate about \$3.5 million in property tax revenue each year, he said.

The Westford Centre project is not related to the Hampton Inn and Bob Evans restaurant set to be built just east of the Sheetz service station/convenience store at the corner of South Raccoon Road and Route 224.

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