

BUILDERS ARE GIVEN EXTENSION BUT MIRAMAR IS IRKED BY ADULT CENTER DELAY

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

Miramar's City Commission has voted to extend the approval for construction of an adult living care facility for another 90 days.

The project has been repeatedly delayed at the contractor's request since it was first approved in July 2000.

The new extension will give developers until August 20 to begin work on the facility at the corner of Pembroke Road and Douglas Boulevard according to Debra Walker, City Clerk.

The original request to build the Prosper Pointe Assisted Living Retirement Facility involved a four-story, 206,589-square-foot assisted living facility with 130 units to house up to 260 people, plus a 21,971-square-foot multipurpose building and a three-story, 34,800-square-foot medical office building.

The extension was the third given to the project by the commissioners. Similar extensions were approved in 2001 and 2002.

Representatives of the developers cited the difficulty in locating an operator for the facility and problems securing financing as reasons for requesting an additional extension.

In addition, city officials said that they had asked the company to change their original plans for the outside appearance of the building and to provide residential opportunities for a larger number of low-income residents than originally proposed.

The new extension was approved with two dissenting votes, those of Mayor Lori Moseley and Commissioner George Pedlar.

"I have no problem with the project, I still support it," Pedlar said. "My problem is with the constant delays."

"If they can't do it, they need to come clean and tell us that they can't do it," Pedlar added. "We need to come to the point where we say enough is enough."

Pedlar also expressed frustration that the developers had not appeared in person at prior Commission meetings. At the May 7 meeting where the extension was granted they sent their attorney rather than appearing in person.

"I am not accusing them of using delaying tactics," Pedlar said. However, the Commissioner said that the company might be "stringing us along," if they do not intend to use the property for the purpose it was purchased.

Miramar's City Manager Bob Payton said he approved of the Commission's extension of the permits. "I'm optimistic that the Commission allowed them to extend so they would not have to start all over again with another company."

However, Payton said that he was not sure if the current applicant would be able to complete the project as planned. "It is going to be difficult for them to find the financing," he said.

Payton said that the company may want to use the land for a different purpose, but any change of usage would have to come back to the Commission for approval.

Should this proposal fail, Payton said that the city's social services department would most likely search for another firm to open a similar facility on another property.

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