

Townhouses approved for Woods at Myrtle Point

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The St. Mary's County Planning Commission has approved a revision of the plan for the Woods at Myrtle Point to allow for 131 townhouse units. The Woods at Myrtle Point has had a checkered past with the former owner criticized for sediment control problems that caused runoff into the Patuxent River.

The project is now under new ownership. The previous owner went bankrupt and the development was purchased in November of 2011 by Curtis Development Corporation of Clinton. The 283-acre parcel is approved for a total of 223 units. There were 55 single-family lots in the first section of phase 1, all of which have been built. A second section is under development and 15 lots are under contract, according to Curtis' representative, George Rathled.

Rathled said the townhouses would be screened from Patuxent Beach Road (Route 4). They would be on the right side of Patuxent Boulevard coming off Patuxent Beach Road and entering the land owned by the developer. The intersection is now served with a traffic signal. The townhouses would have ground floor double garages.

The planners expressed pleasure at the stormwater management plans for the new section, which is a consolidation of the previous proposed Sections 2 and 3. Developer's engineer Pat Mudd said Curtis would be using current state stormwater management regulations which are stricter than the regulations under which the previous sections were constructed.

Mudd said the townhouse section would use more and smaller stormwater retention structures which are easier to maintain. The system which caused runoff was linear and constructed with a stone base which once silt filled it the system failed and the water had no place to go except a gully and then into the river. Mudd said it was an issue of maintenance, which is the responsibility of the property owners association. "This is a better stormwater plan from an environmental standpoint," Mudd said.

The project is served by Metropolitan Commission central water and sewer and the developers have been paying for Equivalent Dwelling Units for the entire build out.

At a Potomac River Association briefing in 2011, Patuxent Riverkeeper Fred Tutman said the stormwater management problems in Woods at Myrtle Point were one of the motivators for the state improving its storm water management regulations which went into effect in 2010.

Rathled explained the delay in building the clubhouse and swimming pool was caused by the discovery that the land set aside for that was in the State Critical Area. He said the Critical Area Commission would not give them a waiver so they had to go through the process of getting a growth allocation. He said the administrative process has slowed things down but