

Timber Springs retirement community back on track

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It's been nearly two years in the making, but the Timber Springs retirement community moved one step closer Monday evening to becoming a reality after the planning and zoning commission gave approval to a new development. The revised plans now need approval from the city commissioners next month, then they will go back to the planning and zoning commission for final approval.

In June, Dallas-based development company Archangel Capital Partners entered into a contract to buy the Timber Springs site on Maroney Drive. Based on the city's approval and financing issues, construction on the site could begin early next year, according to Joe Geer with Archangel.

"I feel very comfortable about the market and our prospects of moving forward with the plan as designed," Geer said. "Obviously, like any kind of development, there are hurdles that can come up that could cause issues. But I've said this multiple times ... we are in a market where the lender gets to dictate what you're going to do."

According to Geer, the project is expected to cost a total of \$41 million, which is \$9 million less than previous estimates. Construction could take between 15 to 20 months, depending on weather conditions.

The Timber Springs project has been marketed as an upscale all-inclusive retirement community complete with condos, stand-alone homes, assisted living and on-site medical care.

Timber Springs has been to the approval stage before, but when the plans changed hands, so did the overall design. And in the interest of "due diligence," City Planner Larissa Philpot said the city decided to restart the process.

Steve Bartlett of Barwin Engineering Consultants is assisting the project's developers and told the commission that previous plans had called for one large building. The new plans now call for several smaller structures. But the services to be offered are virtually unchanged, he said.

Bartlett said that by revising the original plans, the project should cost less and will call for less heavy grading of the hilly site.

"It's a pretty site, but there's also a lot of hills," he said. "By being able to maneuver these buildings around, this has allowed us to have a slightly smaller footprint, break the parking up differently, and we will have less utilities and infrastructure as well as more economical designs for the buildings."

The proposed site will include a dedicated nursing building, a 140-unit independent living facility and 21 individual plots for "executive homes."

Local residents and future neighbors of the Timber Springs community raised concerns over erosion to the hill, to which Bartlett said that a combination of retaining walls and filled dirt material will level out the steeper parts of the property.