

Project welcomed home

By David Hennessey

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Norwalk Mayor Richard A. Moccia announced Tuesday in a City Hall press conference that a new development will break ground this April in the neighborhood surrounding West Main, Summer and Jefferson streets.

The residential development, called "Summerview Square," received unanimous approval from the Norwalk Planning and Zoning Commission last December.

According to project developers, the 63-unit rental community will be constructed on land owned by AG Phase 1 and AG Phase 2, which hired Summerview Development Group LLC, a local real estate development and building company, to head the project.

"This started with just a germ of an idea," said Andrew J. LaSala Jr., a partner of the Summerview Development Group and immediate past president of the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Fairfield County.

"Norwalk has fostered the feeling that developers are welcome here," LaSala added.

Summerview Square, which has been designed by architect Raymond Sullivan of The Sullivan Architectural Group in Norwalk, will be a combination of mostly two-bedroom and one-bedroom units, some with dens, that will each have individual parking spaces. According to developers, the project will be constructed in four phases. The first will begin on Summer Street with the construction of 13 units. Developers have pegged

completion time for that portion of the project at five to six months. Elevator accessibility will be available for the handicapped. LaSala also said that all construction will take place with "green practices" in mind. "We as builders are a lot more ecologically friendly than people give us credit for," he said. Moccia commended LaSala and Sullivan, as well as all the developers involved in Summerview Square, in bringing perspective construction plans early to the attention of residents who might be concerned with changes to the face of the neighborhood. Christine Abraham, president of the West Main Street Neighborhood Association, said developers have been very accommodating and in tune with the needs of the people. "They gave us a lot of things that they promised they were going to do, and they did them," Abraham said. "This is not something that's going to hurt it's going to help." Summerview Development Group even sponsored a neighborhood cleanup of the area, in addition to conducting neighborhood meetings to build a feeling of camaraderie as well as to keep neighbors informed of developing design concepts. Sullivan said designs of Summerview Square will "reflect the historical character" of the area. There will be three different styles of housing available, which will not give the development a cookie-cutter appearance, Sullivan said. Colonial, Victorian and shingle-style residences are all planned for construction, he said. Rental rates will be priced at market rate comparable to the surrounding community, and 10 percent of the units, as required by law, will be set aside for affordable housing. Moccia also said, "We're going to put people to work when we start construction. The developers want to make a profit and have a good development, but they also want to work with the city." Neal Berko, director of development for Summerview Development Group LLC, said the group will be looking to local contractors to complete construction on the project. "We're not outsourcing here," he said. "It speaks volumes about the quality of workmanship we believe is in the

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area." Berko said the project could employ anywhere from 70 to 120 local trades people. "This is going to be something that is really invigorating," Sullivan said.

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