

## Seashore Gardens adding apartments as low-income housing for elderly

10 of the new units will accommodate residents with special needs

By FELICIA COMPIAN, Staff Writer | Posted: Wednesday, August 25, 2010



Construction on 58 affordable senior housing units at Seashore Gardens Living Center continued Monday in Galloway Township. The work is scheduled to be finished in spring 2011.



Seashore Gardens Living Center is expanding on its "mission to aid the elderly" to include an affordable housing development, President and CEO Martin Klein confirmed.

Klein said the new development has been a part of Seashore Gardens' long-term plan since it moved from Atlantic City to Galloway Township in 2002. The project is made possible by the

Seashore Gardens Foundation, a separate, not-for-profit entity that provides assistance to the current living center and other programs, Klein said.

"Right now, it's just a giant hole in the ground," Klein said of the project. "But once it's done, 10 of the 58 units will accommodate residents with special needs. Offering the low-income housing is another part of our mission to the elderly."

Tri-County Real Estate Maintenance Company has begun building the three-story, U-shaped building at the Galloway Township site and work is scheduled for completion in late spring 2011.

Architect Peter Levasseur, of KDA Architects in Voorhees, said the architectural design is intended to match the existing two-story building there, which his firm also designed. The new building will include a large club room and "servery," rather than a full-sized commercial kitchen, he said. Each one-bedroom unit will include a combination kitchen and dining room, a living room, bathroom and a large closet, architectural renderings show.

Communal living spaces such as the "Boardwalk" and gift shop at the main living center, and services including physical therapy and adult day care, will be available to all the residents, creating a campus effect, Klein said.

Levasseur said shared amenities free up more funds to be spent on larger units and communal living spaces.

"We have a pretty strong senior living practice in the office, so we're aware of what's in the marketplace," Levasseur said. "From the start, (Klein's) impression of what affordable housing should be was a reasonable-sized apartment, which is not so common in affordable housing. For example, just about every one (of the apartments) has a balcony or outdoor patio space, which makes it more desirable even though it's not inside, occupiable space."

The average apartment will range in size from 700 to 750 square feet with an additional storage locker assigned to each unit, Levasseur said; the two smallest apartments are 593 square feet each, and the rest are as large as 825 square feet. Klein said the units were designed to be larger than the average low-income unit, to create a more pleasant environment for residents as part of the foundation's mission.

Fair Share Housing Center Attorney Kevin Walsh said the proposed square footage is more than the minimum required, which he put at about 600 square feet. But he could not say what the statewide average size for low-income housing is, saying he was not aware of any agency that maintains such statistics.

Klein said the average rent would be \$605 per month, including heat and hot water.

The building will meet green building standards set by the Housing Mortgage and Finance Agency, including Energy Star appliances and light fixtures, Levasseur said.

The Seashore Gardens Foundation obtained about \$13 million in funding through tax credits, government subsidies and a grant from the Housing Mortgage & Finance Agency, Klein said.

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