

Nonprofit unveils plans for LGBT-friendly senior housing

August 18, 2017 By Sophia Chang sophia.chang@newsday.com



LGBT Network chief executive David Kilmnick and D&F Development Group principal Peter Florey (left) discuss a new LGBT senior housing project in Bay Shore. (Credit: Newsday / J. Conrad Williams Jr.)

The LGBT Network on Thursday unveiled plans for a 75-unit affordable housing apartment complex in Bay Shore for senior citizens identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, as well as seniors who are LGBT-friendly.

The development is planned for downtown Bay Shore, next to the LGBT Network's existing community center on Park Avenue and Mechanicsville Road and near the Bay Shore Long Island Rail Road station. The proposed \$30 million development, by the D & F Development Group of Levittown, will be anchored by a new 8,000-square-foot community center for the LGBT Network.

The Islip planning board voted to approve the application at its Aug. 17 meeting. The Islip Town Board is expected to vote on the development this fall.

If approved, the development will be the first of its kind on Long Island, according to David Kilmnick, chief executive of the LGBT Network.

"The need for LGBT housing is exponential," Kilmnick said, adding that LGBT seniors are especially at risk for discrimination in group homes or nursing homes. "Some LGBT older adults feel the need to return to the closet in their golden years in order to ensure they will receive quality care or avoid rejection and violence from fellow residents," he said.

This can send these senior citizens into "isolation and depression, especially given the greater likelihood of not having children, possible rejection from family, and lack of caregivers," Kilmnick said.

The four-story building will have 71 one-bedroom apartments and four two-bedroom apartments. The apartments will be geared

toward tenants making 60 to 80 percent of the area median income, or about \$35,000 to \$85,000 a year, D & F principal Peter Florey said. Rents are anticipated to be \$1,000 to \$1,600.

Tenants are required to meet only two criteria: age — applicants must be at least 55 years old — and income, Kilmnick said.

The housing staff will follow all Fair Housing Act state and federal guidelines, which prohibit discrimination based on factors including sexual orientation, and the apartments will be open to seniors who are not LGBT, but will be marketed to those in the LGBT community and beyond, Kilmnick said. In addition, there will likely be a lottery process to select tenants, Florey said.

Florey said the marketing for the complex will “involve reaching out to those who are least likely to apply. In addition to that, we will be doing extensive outreach to the LGBT community to make sure they’re also aware of this project.”

Kilmnick said his group’s history in Bay Shore is a good omen of how he hopes the complex and its tenants will be received.

“We feel that Bay Shore is a safe community because part of what we do, we don’t just stay in our center and are insular,” he said. “We really get out and are part of the community.”

CORRECTION: A previous version of this story had an incorrect date for the planning board vote due to an editing error.

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