

## West-side marina, resort planned for Portsmouth

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Houses, club, marina, condos, tennis and more are planned for resort village.

PORTSMOUTH — What was once the arrival port for West Coast lumber to be shipped throughout the northeast will dock yachts of guests and visitors to a resort village in the Melville marine district if plans are approved by the Planning Board.

Northern Waterfront Associates, LP, a partnership in which O'Neill Properties is a controlling entity, purchased the former Weyerhaeuser land and surrounding properties and has requested a special hearing with the Planning Board to review its master plan of a resort village, operating as a vacation spot but with ownership potential of the residences.

The proposed project area is just north of another O'Neill Properties development — the Carnegie Abbey Club; the Carnegie Tower, which is now in reconstruction phase after having demolished the former Kaiser tower; and the marina, which should be nearing completion.

The resort development plan has some significant changes from what O'Neill representatives described last May as conceptual plans for this property and the former Hood land — for which they have not submitted plans. Town officials wrote and adopted

ordinances for such planned unit developments last September.

In the conceptual plan, the company had proposed 84 single-family homes, a marina and a recreational complex with tennis courts, pool, a driving range and golf academy.

The master plan that was recently submitted includes 50 single-family lots for houses of 2,500 square feet or more, mostly east of the railroad tracks. Plans also include 20 of what the company terms "carriage units"; single-family cottages that are smaller in square-footage and are on smaller lots, similar to the Royal Cottages at the Carnegie Abbey Club, a representative said.

There are also five multi-family structures with a total of 82 units, each one 2,000 square feet in area. The multi-family buildings and recreation complex are situated west of the tracks near the marina. The largest building will have 38 units. The rest of the units will be in three connecting multi-family buildings, except for 10 units to be built on the second floor of an adjacent 10,750 square-foot building with plans for a club on the first level.

Another structure of 10,640 square feet will house a club function room. Plans for a marina complex show a marina office building, condominium common area building and a yacht club at the foot of the dock. Permits must be obtained to build out an unspecified number of slips on the dock. Golfing areas are not included in the

plan. But plans specify four grassed tennis courts and a large outdoor pool.

The company is proposing to make a connecting road of crushed shells alongside the tracks to the Carnegie Abbey Club off Willow Lane.

Pieced together, the property contains 104 acres to be accessed from Bristol Ferry Road. Eighty acres was purchased in February by Northern Waterfront Associates, LP for \$18.5 million from East Passage Real Estate Associates, LP, EP 3 Real Estate Associates, LP, and EP 4 Real Estate Associates, LP, care of Kane & Kane, Inc., of Fall River. The package includes the former Weyerhaeuser land, surrounding lots, and the connecting road from Bristol Ferry Road. This piece straddles the railroad tracks and continues west to Narragansett Bay, with 1,165 linear feet of shoreline. At the same time, Northern Waterfront bought the abutting 15.95 acres from Mary Soares for \$2.95 million. Another 8.2 acres adjacent to the former Weyerhaeuser land had been purchased for \$2,076,500 in May 2006 by the company from Beach Acquisition, LP.

There are some structures still standing on the former Weyerhaeuser property that was built in the mid-1920s. According to Glenn Russell Jr., whose family has lived near the property, his grandfather did electrical work in a brick building — he dubs it "the power house" — which was used by the Weyerhaeuser company to produce its own electricity. A Northern Waterfront Associates representative said the company hopes to incorporate the power house into the project.

During the era the Weyerhaeuser company was in business, freighters used the pier as the primary port to ship lumber from the west coast to the northeast. The most recent owner of the property completely reconstructed the 640-foot pier in the 1990s. A shellfish aquaculture venture had been planned at the head of the deep water dock but never got off the ground. Fishing boats would occasionally dock at the pier, as well as tramp freighters that would transport miscellaneous goods to the Caribbean islands.

#### **Planned resort development rules**

- \* Residential development with lodging, restaurants and recreation
- \* A permitted density of two residential units per acre. No affordable housing requirement
- \* No structure shall be located within 100 feet of the nearest residential lot. Parking areas cannot be closer than 50 feet from residential lots
- \* Allowed to build to 40-foot height
- \* By 60 days after approval, the party must enter a development agreement which stipulates the phasing of construction
- \* A set of performance standards will be written specific to each project