



Bear Development's latest Kenosha projects include senior housing, single-family subdivision

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Bear Development plans to complete a largely undeveloped Kenosha single-family subdivision and at a neighboring site develop 111 units of multi-generational housing.

The city may provide \$5.35 million to assist in the development of these residential projects.

Kenosha-based Bear is proposing the two projects at sites located south of Washington Road, between 32nd and 39th avenues.

Specifically, the multi-family buildings would be constructed on sites located on either side of 40th Street, just east of 35th Avenue and directly behind the former United Auto Workers Local 72 union hall. Bear acquired the union hall this summer for \$1.1 million. The subdivision, meanwhile, is located between 32nd and 35th avenues.

The 111 multi-family units include 80 units of age-restricted senior housing, which be built on a site on the south side of 40th Street. The remaining 31 units include seven family townhouses on the same site as the senior housing, as well as a 24-unit building to be put up on the north side of the street.

The project was endorsed by the Kenosha plan commission in late November. It next heads to the common council for final approval in January, said Zohrab Khaligian, Kenosha community development specialist.

As for the neighboring subdivision, Bear could build up to 88 new single-family homes, which would add to the 14 houses previously built there by another developer, Khaligian said.

The plan commission is scheduled to meet on Monday evening to consider the proposed \$5.35 million in city assistance for the developments, which would be provided through tax incremental financing.

Including administrative costs, the city would be spending \$5.38 million in all.

According to city documents, the money (in the form of a revenue bond to be provided to Bear) would assist in the developer's acquisition of the subdivision land and construction of site and infrastructure improvements there. It would also assist Bear in construction of the multi-family buildings and related site and infrastructure improvements.

Khaligian noted that the particular tax incremental district, or TID, that would provide the financing has already incurred a lot of debt. The TID was created in 2005 in part to finance construction of public streets and storm water sewers in the area around a public park and the proposed residential subdivision. The original developer only ended up building 14 houses in the 110-lot subdivision due to the 2008 market crash and resulting economic recession, said Khaligian.

As a result, the city would need to extend the life of the TID by three years and transfer an estimated \$1.4 million from a nearby TID, which was created for the construction of an Amazon fulfillment center and has excess tax increment, he said.

In addition to city assistance through tax incremental financing, the multi-family project would also rely on low-income housing tax credits. According to a letter to the city from Bear, construction is slated to begin in January 2021 and finish in April 2022. This timeline is dependent on the project being awarded the tax credits from the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority.

Bear plans to continue operating the former union hall, and is seeking an occupancy permit, the letter states. The hall has a capacity to hold up to 840 people.

Representatives of Bear didn't respond to a request for comment.