

Montgomery Park Phase II in the works on site of former Montgomery Hospital

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NORRISTOWN — As Montgomery Park Senior Housing continues to grow, memories of Montgomery Hospital, the venerable structure it replaced, belong more and more to the distant past.

Four years after the hospital building was demolished, and a year after the original Montgomery Park debuted with 50 apartments, developer Elon Development Company, Inc., Allied Construction and property manager Altman Management Company are collaborating on the sequel — the \$13.1 million Montgomery Park Senior Housing Phase II.



Plans are in development for a second apartment building on the site of Montgomery Park in Norristown.

“There’s tremendous demand and tremendous interest, based on the results of Phase I and that’s certainly going to carry over to phase II,” noted Francis Vargas, vice president of Fort Washington-based Elon Development, who recently presented the Phase II proposal at a Norristown Council meeting.



The new four-story building, to be designed by Kramer and Marks Architects and constructed on the available vacant land.

The new four-story building, to be designed by Kramer and Marks Architects and constructed on the available vacant land, will mirror the original, with a slightly smaller presence, while housing 42 units, with on-site parking, laundry, community room and landscaping, Vargas explained.

“We’re building off the success of Phase I. Many of the approvals are already in place, but we are awaiting an announcement of an award for tax credits and funding from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency in July.”

The tax credits earned will be used to attract an equity investor, a scenario that will likely

see the return of Bank of America, he added.

Back in 2014, Elon had negotiated an agreement of sale to purchase the hospital building and 3.7-acre site from Einstein Healthcare Network (EHN), which owned the former Montgomery Hospital.

As previously reported in The Times Herald, a multi-disciplinary group with elected representatives from Norristown, Montgomery County, state officials, EHN and Montgomery Hospital had tried for several years to find a viable reuse for the hospital building and land. Mission First was ultimately selected by the group, with a plan for 123 senior housing units subsidized by state financing, but the organization’s grant request was rejected by the PHFA and so a second request for proposals was advertised to attract a viable reuse plan.

That’s when the Elon Group won the right to develop the land.

“There is a tremendous need for affordable senior housing in this area,” Vargas said, “If we are awarded in July, we would hope to start construction in February 2020. We would take one year to build, and based on the interest in Phase I, we anticipate leasing within a couple of months after construction is complete.”

The building will be designed with Passive House energy standards, Vargas pointed out.

“It will also be Energy Star and meet Enterprise Green criteria, so there are three different but related energy efficient criteria.”

The combined ratings translate to cheaper utility bills for residents, he noted.

While no longer claiming any ownership, Einstein remains supportive in the background of the project, offering medical services to tenants and coordinating with the Montgomery Park social worker on site, Vargas explained.

The official presentation to Council made note of the complex’s location in the heart of Norristown, “accessible via public transportation and located within walking distance to several retail centers offering an array of amenities. The site is in close proximity to numerous churches, a public library, and many medical offices, including Einstein’s Karabot Medical Center across the street.”



A second apartment building is now be planned for the site of the former Montgomery Hospital.