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Ocean County Obs

Pine Beach forum set on Farragut land swap

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PINE BEACH — The Borough Council will hold a public hearing on plans to swap Green Acres property at the Admiral Farragut academy to move ahead with the sale.

Mayor Russell Corby announced the council will be holding a public hearing during the regular council meeting of July 14.

The hearing is required by the state Department of Environmental Protection as part of the application to exchange 1 acres of property purchased with Green Acres funds for property designated for development.

Originally, the borough purchased the football field and pool area, planning to turn them into public property.

Pennrose Properties, Inc. of Cherry Hill, purchased a portion of the site in November with plans to construct a 200-unit long-term assisted living facility.

Pennrose needed one contiguous piece of property for their facility,

and the pool split the property.

As part of the agreement, the borough will swap the pool area for the bluff area fronting Russell Hall, making the bluff and field one piece of open space property to be turned into recreational land.

DEP rules do allow for Green Acres property to be developed as long there is an equal or greater amount of property designated to replace it.

Final approval of the swap would come in September, Corby said, when the request comes before the Statehouse Commission for approval.

Another portion of the process will come next week when Corby plans to present amendments to the Planning Board designating changes in the Farragut Property development zone that will allow Pennrose to build its facility.

Corby said the amendments would only pertain to the area planned to be developed by Pennrose and would not affect the zoning in any other part of the borough.

Corby said should all the amendments be adopted by the council Pennrose could be before the Planning Board by August with a presentation of its plans.

Related to development of recreational space, known as "Vista 2000" project, the borough is completing road and drainage improvements at Riverside Drive and Avon Road, Corby said.

Corby said he hoped DEP would grant the borough the necessary permits to begin construction of the River Walk.

The mile long, 8-foot-wide walkway would run along Riverside Drive from Motor Road to Station Avenue.

The first phase of the project would see construction begin at Motor and Avon roads at one end and Station and Cedar avenues at the other.

The project is expected to take several years to complete.

Borough officials plan to pay for the project through grants.

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