

Elderly housing complex OK'd in Townsend

By Damien Fisher

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TOWNSEND -- The Zoning Board of Appeals approved a 36-unit elderly housing complex Wednesday night.

The board voted unanimously to approve the draft decision for Atwood Elder Housing project located behind Dudley Road. The project falls under the state affordable housing law, 40 B

Jesse Johnson, the project engineer, said every unit in the proposed apartment building will be deemed affordable for low to moderate income seniors.

The one bedroom apartments will only be open to people at least 60-year-old or older, Johnson said.

The project is considered a "friendly 40 B," project, said ZBA Vice Chair Darlene Sodano.

Projects that have at least 25 percent of the units set aside as affordable housing qualify under 40 B to bypass local zoning regulations, Johnson said.

The town still has input on the project, as the developer and the town must negotiate on what regulations will be adhered to in the project, Sodano said.

The last 40 B development approved, Turnpike Village, took more than a year to get approval because of lengthy negotiations, she said. The Atwood Acres project took about three months.

"You're talking three months for a friendly 40 B versus a year," Sodano said.

Since the project is 100 percent affordable, and it is being built by the non-profit organization Rcap Solutions Inc., the town was eager to help with the project, Sodano said.

This is the second phase of the Atwood Acres elderly housing project. The first, 50-unit apartment building was built about 18 years ago, according to Selectman David Chenelle.

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