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Fallsburg to hold rezoning hearing for 575 homes

By Ramsey Al-Rikabi

Fallsburg – People will get the chance to speak out tonight on proposed rezoning to allow for 575 homes near the Ulster County border.

The Fallsburg Development Corp. hopes to have 200 acres east of Woodbourne on Route 52 rezoned to make way for a development called Walden Pond. The plan includes single-family homes, town houses and apartments, as well as retail space.

The land is currently zoned for 700 to 1,000 mobile homes.

“If we don’t rezone it, the landowner can turn around and legally put in trailers,” said Town of Fallsburg Supervisor Steven Levine. “We have enough trailer parks and we don’t need any more.”

Jeremy Gorelick, vice-president of the Fallsburg Development Corp., anticipates some anxiety about the school districts capacity. Fallsburg School District Superintendent Walter Milton, Jr. plans to address that issue at tonight’s meeting, **Gorelick** said.

Milton estimates the development will add about 200 students to a district almost at capacity. But, he added, “we’re nowhere near having a conversation on capital projects.”

At the Town Board’s insistence, all of the units must be owner-occupied.

“We have to look into bringing in permanent residents who would be paying higher prices for new homes, who would make our area more diversified, and who would bring up the town standards,” Levine said.

The public hearing is scheduled for 7:45 tonight at the Fallsburg Town Hall, South Fallsburg.

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South Fallsburg
New houses cause for concern

People crammed into Town Hall here last night to voice their concerns over the proposed rezoning of land for a 575-unit housing development called Walden Pond.

Although the Town Board did not vote on rezoning the land for houses, they seemed to support the project.

“You know (growth) is coming,” said board member Neil Gilberg. “Let’s prepare for it.”

Residents and board members sparred during the standing-room-only meeting over what impact the town’s inevitable growth will have on their quality of life.

Fallsburg resident expressed concern over the developments impact on traffic, schools and taxes.

“I don’t think anybody here is opposed to growth,” said Fallsburg school board President Robert Scheinman. “I think what scares people are here is the density.”

“We’re going to be paying more taxes,” said Ira Gold, owner of Sullivan Fire Protection in South Fallsburg. “The projects not a bad idea. It’s just too big.”