

Habitat For Humanity Finds Value In Abandoned Hawleyville Condos

By ANDREW GOROSKO

Workers for Habitat for Humanity of Danbury last week salvaged valuable reusable items from 12 condominiums which were built, but were never occupied, at The Homesteads at Newtown age-restricted housing complex off Mt Pleasant Road in Hawleyville.

The Habitat workers' efforts came before the developers of The Woods at Newtown demolish those 12 condos to make way for the Woods' planned 178-unit age-restricted condo complex on the 50-acre site.

Because the Woods' plans for the property differ markedly from what had been planned by The Homesteads, the 12 condos were slated for demolition.

Kohl Construction Group of Teaneck, N.J., is doing site development work at the property in preparation for the construction of buildings.

Among the items that Habitat workers removed from the condos were: windows, cabinets, bathroom vanities, doors, copper piping, lighting fixtures, countertops, assorted hardware, and major appliances, plus furnaces and air conditioning units.

The goal was to save as many useful items as possible before the 12 condos are demolished.

Habitat spokesman Chris Goodrich said Habitat has storage space to keep the collected items for possible reuse in Habitat projects, or for resale.

Habitat is a nonprofit organization that uses volunteer labor to build affordable housing. Habitat has built two homes on Philo Curtis Road in Sandy Hook.

So far, Habitat has either built or renovated 19 homes in the area, Mr Goodrich said.

In June 2006, following lengthy review, Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) members unanimously approved the construction of The Woods at Newtown. P&Z members approved the application from Bashert Developers, LLC, of New City, N.Y., in Rockland County.

The approval endorsed the construction of 182 units of "congregate housing," and 46 "independent living" condos, all for people over age 55. The site, which has a street address of 12-16 Pocono Road, would have driveway access from 166 Mt Pleasant Road (Route 8).

The Woods at Newtown would be the largest age-restricted condo complex to be built in town since Walnut Tree Village, a 189-unit project on 52 acres, which was constructed on Walnut Tree Hill Road in Sandy Hook between 1995 and 2005.

The Woods is planned for the site of a depleted sand-and-gravel mine, where The Homesteads at Newtown had planned to construct a 178-unit age-restricted housing complex, comprised of congregate housing and independent living units. After The Homesteads entered bankruptcy, those plans did not materialize. Bashert acquired the largely unbuild development site for \$8.9 million in the spring of 2005 through bankruptcy proceedings.

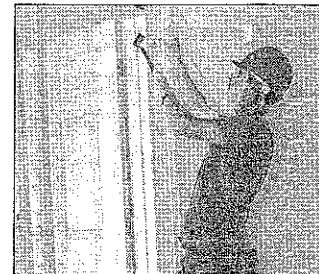
The Homesteads has an adjacent 100-unit assisted-living apartment building, which opened in 2001. The Homesteads received initial town construction approvals in 1988.



Representatives of Habitat for Humanity of Danbury and Kohl Construction Group of Teaneck, N.J., gathered last week at the Hawleyville site where Habitat was stripping reusable items from 12 condominium units that were built for The Homesteads at Newtown, but which were never occupied. After those 12 condos are demolished by Kohl, the property will become the site for age-restricted The Woods at Newtown. From left, Christopher Brown of Habitat, Alan Litt of Kohl, Dave Dillon of Habitat, Carin Routh of Kohl, Chris Goodrich of Habitat, Mark Medeiros of Habitat, and Kevin Romano of Kohl.

The Homesteads at Newtown constructed 12 condominiums at its Hawleyville site which were never occupied. The developers of The Woods at Newtown allowed Habitat for Humanity last week to salvage an assortment of useful items from the condos, which will be demolished to make way for The Woods complex.

—See Photos, Gorosko



Chris Goodrich of Habitat uses a prying tool to remove some door frame moldings from within one of the condominiums where Habitat removed items for possible reuse in future Habitat projects, or for resale.



Some of the cabinets, doors, and appliances that Habitat for Humanity salvaged from the 12 never-occupied condominiums at the former Homesteads at Newtown complex, which are slated for demolition before The Woods at Newtown, an age-restricted complex, is constructed on the site.

