

Foxdale plans big expansion

By Mike Joseph
mjoseph@centredaily.com

Retirement community seeks to add 100 new rooms, pool, cafe

STATE COLLEGE — The Foxdale Village elderly housing complex plans a substantial expansion that will add about 100 new residential rooms, a swimming pool, parking area and cafe, documents filed with the borough show.

Foxdale executive director and CEO Bill James said Wednesday the new living space will allow for two new levels of care — for people with a dementia diagnosis, which includes Alzheimer’s disease, and for late-stage dementia.

He said the expansion will provide 50 more full and part-time jobs, on top of the current full and part-time staff of about 215.

“We’ll be able to offer employment for a number of people in the area,” he said.

Foxdale is already soliciting new residents, requiring \$2,200 for inclusion on a futures list.

“We’ve been actively marketing and have been accepting deposits for the apartments,” James said. “We’re encourage by the response and the reaction that we’ve had from potential lenders.”

The Quaker-directed retirement community at Marylyn Avenue and University Drive was built in 1988 and includes a

two-story commons building and outlying townhouse buildings, containing 215 residential rooms and units, according to borough project description.

Foxdale more recently acquired seven smaller lots along Marylyn Avenue and merged them with the existing lot into a nearly 22-acre tract off South Atherton Street behind the Ramada Inn and Ruby Tuesday restaurant. In that space, it plans to build a three-story U-shaped building — 41,022 square feet — that would be attached to the commons and would contain 57 apartments as well as the swimming pool on the ground floor, Foxdale’s conceptual plan shows.

The new parking area would also go in the recently acquired space, and separate additions are proposed to the existing commons building, the plans show.

The health care facility at the commons’ northeast corner would be expanded with a two-story addition, 17,000 square feet, which would add 50 more residential rooms, according to the project description prepared by borough zoning officer Herman Slaybaugh. Other additions will provide space for an expanded wellness and fitness center and a cafe.

The plans went before the borough’s design review board for aesthetic input in December and came before the Planning Commission last week because Foxdale is seeking a variance to have five curb cuts on Marylyn Avenue, three more than permitted in zoning regulations.

The curb cut issue turns on a provision that limits the number of cuts on a lot with access to an arterial street. But the provision does not address lot size. Before the tract was consolidated, each of the seven adjoining single-home lots could have had one curb cut each, but after consolidation the 22-acre lot is limited to two.

“This is a case that could warrant a variance,” Slaybaugh said Wednesday.

The Planning Commission, in a split vote, recommended approval of the variance request, which will now go before the zoning hearing board later this month. More detailed land development plans will come later. Borough Council approval is ultimately required.

A timeline on Foxdale’s Web site shows construction starting this summer, continuing through the winter of 2011/12 and move-in occurring in spring 2012.

Mike Joseph can be reached at 235-3910.