

Condominium development begins this month

54-unit facility for older adults comes to Warkworth

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Warkworth — A 54-unit condominium development is about to blossom where an apple orchard once grew on a hill overlooking Warkworth.

Construction of the first four units of the active adult lifestyle Orchard Hill Condominium development begins this month following 37 months of planning involving hundreds of meetings and thousands of hours of work by partners, contractors and suppliers, said Orchard Hill president Bryce Allen during the official groundbreaking ceremony this week.

"This is a day of celebration, and hopefully in three months we'll be having an official opening of Orchard Hills," he said, looking out over frozen, mud-covered ground that will be transformed into homes, lawns, roads, picnic areas, community gardens and walking trails.

Contractors have already built an entrance road and storm water containment pond, and the installation of municipal water systems and sewers and storm sewers is complete, leaving the installation of hydro, natural gas and communications systems and the grading and paving of roads for the early spring, Allen said.

"One special feature is our local focus," he added. "The one thing we promised 37 months ago, is that we wanted to use as much local talent, and as many local suppliers and contractors as we possibly could. So for every service, wherever we could, we contacted the local supplier to see if we could do business."

Allen said he and Orchard Hills vice-president Don Clarke, who is also the main contractor for the project, have long had a vision for a residential development in Warkworth that would provide an alternative for active adults over 55 while enhancing the community's economy. When they were joined by secretary-treasurer and third partner David Pollack, the project became a reality.

The first step was a complete market analysis to determine if the development was feasible and needed in the community, Allen said.

"And it came back positive on all the points, and said the community needed this and could use it."

Pollack said the area has no housing stock targeting active, older adults who are ready to make lifestyle changes.

"There are a lot of people who have large houses and farms and are just finding the upkeep to be too much for them, and they want to do things like travel more than they have been. So with a fully maintained development like this you turn the key and go to Florida for six months or whatever."

The 54 units being built on the the 20-acre site will each have approximately 1,300 square feet of living space on the main level, including two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a rear patio and a one-and-a-half car garage. Most units will have full basements, and the area of all of the units can be increased by adding a loft, and rooms under the garage for storage, a work area, wine or cold cellar.

"Each unit has a unique view of the village, or the extensive green space surrounding the project," Allen said, adding: "Some of the views from the homes are truly spectacular."

Trent Hills Mayor Hector Macmillan said the Orchard Hills partners had "a huge vision" when they set out to bring the new residential development to Warkworth.

"I want to commend you on this vision," he said. "A project like this in a small section of a small municipality is a huge undertaking for anyone, and certainly for our local people and all those people involved. But it's been a win-win for everyone."

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