

# “Mayberry” in Moneta project moving forward

By Elizabeth Farina  
SMITH MOUNTAIN EAGLE

Downtown Moneta and Mayberry Hills is moving forward to becoming reality among the rolling hills between White House Road, Old Moneta Road, Altice Road and Route 122 in Bedford County.

The Smith Mountain Lake/Moneta Friends of the Library hosted Downtown Moneta and residential community Mayberry Hills developer George Aznavorian for an informative presentation about the visionary project to a standing room only audience earlier this month.

“The library sets the tone and pace of how Downtown Moneta will look and feel,” said Aznavorian. The image of the development will have a pre-World War II look with six city blocks of businesses and services that will fulfill local needs from medical to everyday necessities as well as a residential community crowning the proposed development, according to Aznavorian.

The foundation for the vision came from The Parks in Wyndhurst located near Lynchburg. “It is a first hand reference to what we’re doing. Eighty percent of their downtown with residential is a similar mix,” said Aznavorian.

Several developments in the progress for Downtown Moneta/ Mayberry Hills project have occurred over the past month.

First, the Board of Supervisors approved a wastewater treatment plant projected to be completed by late 2006. The county project will be used for the residential, commercial, and retail aspects of the development, according to Aznavorian.

Second, inquiries for residential reservations have been optimistic, he said. The homes in the residential community will bring a sense of community in the area with a tightly woven covenant. “These will be Wyndhurst-type homes that are closer to the street with a front porch,” he said. Forty-plus reservations have been made for Phase I of the project.

The “smart” homes upgrade could provide automatic lighting control, as well as, cell phone climate control to provide more efficient and cost effective measures, according to Aznavorian.

Third, the commercial development is moving forward, too, with several letters of intent. We’ve met with a medical group to start as a nucleus,” he said. The project also has letters of intent from a branch bank, a high-end furniture store, a coffee shop, a hair salon, and spa. The project has also received attention from a national chain pharmacy, according to the project’s web site.

“We’re not looking at major stores, but traditional boutique shops,” he said. “This will be a small town and neighborhood America. We call it Mayberry Hills,” said Aznavorian.

Last, the project will bring Bedford County a new zoning ordinance for a planned district. “A new planned district for us is an ordinance similar to what Wyndhurst has,” Aznavorian said. “Planned district-type zoning makes the language more definitive,” he said.

“We’re developing a planned district that provides enough flexibility and gives protection to neighboring properties,” said Bedford County Planning Commission planner Johnnie Roark. “The Planning Commission has instructed the staff to develop a new zoning designation that works with all planned developments. Our goal is to present it at the end of April in draft form to the Planning Commission,” said Roark.

If ultimately approved by the board of supervisors, Downtown Moneta / Mayberry Hills will be the first of its kind for the county.

When the Aznavorian family first came to the Lake area, they were saddened by the loss of businesses in old Moneta once the railroad bypass came through the area several years ago. “We want to bring back pride and renaissance to this area here. We are in the Westlake position at three and a half miles on this side of the bridge,” he said. “It’s not just a Bedford project, but a Lake project,” he said.

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