

The Springs at Bethsaida

Senior Living Community Planned for North Tustin

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR TO MAKE FINAL VOTE ON THE SPRINGS AT BETHSAIDA
March 15 Board Hearing set for 1 p.m.

March 1, 2011 – The County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing and final vote, March 15, on The Springs at Bethsaida, a proposed senior living community in North Tustin. In January, after a 10 hour public hearing, the county planning commission recommended approval. The Commission also recommended that the County Board of Supervisors certify the EIR, adopt the findings and approve the Planning Application for a Specific Plan Amendment, Use Permit and Site Development Permit for the project.

Supporters for the project packed the commission hearing room and overflow space. Most of the speakers live near the site and many hoped to be able to live there one day – or hoped their relatives might have the opportunity. In addition, leadership from several senior advocacy groups including Dr. Marilyn Ditty, with Age Well Senior Services and Dr. Jesse Jones, a professor of gerontology from Cal State University Fullerton spoke to the tremendous shortage of senior housing in Orange County.

For More Than 50 Years the Property Was Intended To Be Used For Church-Related Purposes

Located on Newport Avenue, north of 17th street, the 7.25 acre lot was donated to the Roman Catholic Diocese in 1958 with the stipulation that it was to be used for the mission of the church. Under the current zoning, Residential Single Family (100-RSF), other uses including churches, schools and community care facilities are also allowed in the 100-RSF district, subject to the approval of a use permit. The Diocese is seeking a zone change to Senior Residential Housing (SRH) because the *Springs at Bethsaida* varies from a community care facility in that it reflects the trend in senior living which includes both independent living and assisted living in a residential community.

The Diocese has contracted with Kisco Senior Living to design, build and operate the project which will continue to be owned by the Diocese. According to Tony Ferrero, Development Manager for Kisco, “After more than four years and a complete environmental review, we are pleased that the analysis clearly shows that *The Springs at Bethsaida* will be an asset to North Tustin. We have listened carefully to the community and created a project that is sensitive to

the unique character and charm of this area and provides compatibility with the adjacent residences.”

Will Not Set Precedent for Commercial Uses

The EIR and staff report concludes that the project is “residential”, not “commercial”, and therefore, will not set a precedent for commercial development within the North Tustin.

Addresses an Important County Need for Senior Housing

The planning staff report notes that “...the special housing needs of seniors are an important concern in the County of Orange”. The **senior population in Orange County is expected to grow 86%** in the next 10 years. The report added, “The proposed senior living project is also consistent with the stated goal of the Housing Element by providing housing to special needs groups, particularly the elderly, in a way that maintains the dignity, self-respect, and quality of life of mature residents in the County.”

Consistent With the NTSP/No Significant Long Term Impacts

The environmental review concluded that there were no significant long term impacts and only three unavoidable short term construction-related impacts which are typical of development which provides underground parking. The report stated:

- The project is consistent with the County General Plan’s residential density limits.
- The proposed senior housing project is residential in character, is compatible with its surroundings and would meet all development standards established in the North Tustin Specific Plan.
- The proposed architectural design and the proposed buffer landscaping make this project’s design suitable for the North Tustin community.
- The proposed project is a residential community, and not a commercial facility.
- By definition, rezoning (this site from Residential to Senior Residential) will not be illegal spot zoning.
- Changing the land use designation within the NTSP for this parcel does not set a precedent for any future land use changes or rezoning.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange will maintain ownership and oversight of the Springs at Bethsaida through a non-profit entity. The Diocese has contracted with Kisco, one of the nation’s premier developer and operators of senior living communities, to manage the design, construction and operations of the Springs at Bethsaida. A board of directors appointed by the Bishop will oversee the project and set policy, with ownership retained by the Diocese.

For more information visit the Springs at Bethesda website at
<http://www.rcboseniorliving.com>

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