

Affordable Housing on Deck for North Salem?

by [Katherine Pacchiana \(email\)](#) 03-28-2012



Bill Balter presented his Bridleside site plan at a recent North Salem Planning Board meeting.

Photo credit: *Katherine Pacchiana*

NORTH SALEM, N.Y. – Those concerned with the development of vacant land in North Salem can attend a town planning board meeting Wednesday, April 4 to discuss land-use and affordable housing in the area.

On the agenda is a public hearing on a proposed 65-unit development on a 40-acre site at the intersection of June and Starr Lea roads. All units are classified as affordable housing, in accordance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines.

Developer Bill Balter of [Wilder Balter](#) describes the complex as “small scale buildings, two stories high, similar in size to single family houses – nine buildings altogether, including a club house.” It is known as the Bridleside complex.

He said there’ll be 20 one-bedroom units, 40 two-bedroom units and five three-bedroom units. One of the three-bedroom units is set aside for a full-time superintendent.

All units will be rentals. “It’ll have its own sewage treatment plant, septic field and community water system,” he added.

“We already had environmental approval for a development that was only 20 percent affordable. Now it’s 100 percent affordable, which is consistent with zoning but will have less impact on the land.”

In the forthcoming issue of the North Salem Town Newsletter, Supervisor Warren Lucas says he is in favor of the Wilder Balter proposal. If affordable units were intermixed in an ordinary housing complex, Lucas said, much more development would be needed in order to satisfy the terms of the [2009 Affordable Housing Settlement](#) between the county and federal government.

“Building a site with 65 all-affordable units gets us to a very reasonable number of units without a large build-out of homes,” Lucas said. In addition, “Mr. Balter will continue to own and rent the units and he has an excellent track record throughout the county.”

An anonymous email sent to town residents strongly opposes the builder’s plan and Lucas’ stance. The writer cites a loss in tax revenue as a major reason for opposition.

Lucas did not mention specific numbers, but he said the tax issue is a negative for the town. However, he said it is overshadowed by the containment of large building developments.

Balter said he has explored the history of other affordable developments in the area. “It tells me that the majority of people have a local connection. Either they live nearby, work nearby, or have a relative nearby.”

The April 4 planning board meeting will be held in the annex at town hall. It starts at 7:30 p.m. and is open to the public.