

Senior housing project near reality
Old hospital to become apartments
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TICONDEROGA — A project four years in the making may become reality soon.

Liberty Affordable Housing has told Ticonderoga officials it has cleared nearly all hurdles in its plan to renovate the old Moses-Ludington Hospital into senior citizen apartments.

"I can't tell you how excited we are about this project," said Davis Yohe, Liberty Housing deputy executive director. "The time is now; we want to make this happen."

Yohe and other Liberty Housing representatives explained the project to the Ticonderoga town board Jan. 14.

The \$4 million renovation will create 28 apartments, a community room, common areas, a multi-purpose room, lounge, laundry, storage, security office and lobby in the building adjacent to the current hospital. The three-floor building will be made handicap accessible.

Construction is scheduled to start in the spring of 2011 with the first tenants moving in 18 months later.

Final funding approval is expected this summer.

Former Supervisor Bob Dedrick told the town board he and local officials have been working with Liberty on the project since 2006.

"The old Moses-Ludington Hospital means a tremendous amount to us," Dedrick said. "A lot of us were born there. We went there when we were sick. When I was 12 I would have died if not for the old Moses-Ludington.

"We tried for years to find a use for that building, a way to save it," he added. "We looked at creating a veterans' facility, but there was no funding. Then Liberty Housing came along with this idea for senior housing.

"The town really needs senior housing," Dedrick concluded. "I think this is one of the greatest win-win situations in my life in Ticonderoga."

Yohe praised Dedrick for his support and foresight, noting the town asked, and received, an Adirondack Park Agency map change in 2007 that makes the project exempt from APA oversight.

"We couldn't do this without that APA amendment," Yohe said.

Yohe explained the old MLH will be gutted and rebuilt, but will retain its facade. It will appear just as it did in its heyday, he said.

The old MLH building is owned by Inter-Lakes Health, which owns and operates the current hospital, nursing home and adjacent Lord Howe Estates senior housing complex. When the apartments are ready, they'll be operated by CRM Rental management, which now operates Lord Howe Estates in conjunction with Inter-Lakes Health.

"This is something the community can be very proud of when all is said and done," said John Varecka, president of CRM Management.

Varecka noted CRM is now making major improvements at Lord Howe Estates, including new windows and siding on units.

"I think the people in Lord Howe Estates are happy," he said, "and I'm certain the tenants in the new apartments will be as well."