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New Road is about to get a new look

Dilapidated house to become a residence for the developmentally disabled
BY JENNIFER AMATO
 Staff Writer

SOUTH BRUNSWICK — A township resident is giving back to the community by rehabilitating a dilapidated property in town.

A Cape Cod-style bungalow at 313 New Road has been vacant since the owner passed away 10 years ago, so Nick Manis saw an opportunity to eliminate an eyesore while developing a resource for the community.

After consulting with township officials, Manis decided to partner with Community Options Inc., a nonprofit agency dedicated to helping the developmentally disabled. He will knock down the existing building, take over all of the liens, and build a 2,100- square-foot group home that will become a permanent residence for those it will serve. It will also add to the township's affordable housing requirement.

"It was being neglected for so long, it didn't really do well for the neighborhood," said Manis, who, despite a background in real estate, chose to undertake this project on his own, personal accord. "The fact that we can put a good cause in there ... is perfectly aligned with a mission and cause I already appreciate."

Community Options develops residences and employment support using technology and training. Through a transitional setting, the disabled are assisted with finding a job, becoming self-employed, finding a home, or joining community activities.

"This will help migrate other individuals out of institutions and into community living," said Ayesha Patrick, executive director of the central New Jersey branch.

The home will be staffed with nurses and other employees who will assist the residents. There will be community-based day programming as well as employment opportunities throughout the Brunswick area.

Another Community Options home, located in Kendall Park, is already in use and has been "doing really well," according to Patrick.

"We're so excited about this new project, working with Nick. It's really going to change the individuals' lives," she said.

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As for the New Road location, Manis said details are not readily available because the planning stage is not yet finalized, but he hopes to get things done as soon as possible, hopefully within the next few months.

"We are very, very pleased with this type of activity, and hopefully he can continue to help us out down the line," South Brunswick Mayor Frank Gambatese said.

"I'm proud to be from South Brunswick, with the way the township cares about helping people in need," Manis said.

For more information about Community Options Inc., visit www.comop.org or call 908-359-6897.

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