

New veterinary hospital plans take step forward

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The new hospital, which won preliminary land development approval, will be near the University of Phoenix on Route 413 at Lincoln Highway.

Emergency treatment of ailing pets has kept Dr. Robert Orsher and his fellow veterinarians hopping the last 15 years at the Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Center.

They need more room, and should get it soon since the Middletown supervisors granted preliminary land development approval for a new \$5 million, 21,000-square-foot veterinary hospital to be built near the University of Phoenix on Veterans Highway (Route 413) at Lincoln Highway.

Orsher, his wife, Andrea, partner Dr. Laura Tseng and two investors from Florida are buying a 2.27-acre piece of the 9.93-acre Phoenix site from BPG Properties of Wilmington. Orsher would not disclose the purchase price. The BPG property was formerly the I-95 Marketplace.

In addition to preliminary land development approval, the supervisors also granted subdivision approval for the property to be split into two lots. Both approvals are contingent on the township getting some kind of easement so township workers can access some township-owned property adjacent to the Phoenix site. The easement must be on terms acceptable to township solicitor Mike Savona and engineer Herb Gery.

Orsher believes everything can be worked out.

"We're very busy and need a larger place to handle our caseload," he said. "We want to expand the services we offer the community and add things like advanced imaging, an MRI, radiation therapy and other things."

Since 1994, Orsher and Tseng's practice has been located in a 5,000-square-foot building on Old Lincoln Highway near Neshaminy High School. Orsher and his wife own the property there, he said.

Like the current hospital, the new one would be in operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, said Orsher.

He isn't sure what will happen to the building he will be vacating. He doesn't want to sell to a competing veterinary practice but thinks the location would be good for a doctor, dentist, attorney or some other professional.

"We've been in Middletown since we've started and wanted to stay there," Orsher said. "We had chances to build a new place in another township but wanted to stay in Middletown."

If he can get final land development approval and clear any remaining hurdles, Orsher would like to break ground on the project late this year or early next year and finish in late 2010. He and Tseng's practice treats almost any kind of pet on an emergency or referral basis.

Chris English can be reached at 215-949-4193 or cenglish@phillyBurbs.com.

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