

Wellness Center set at White Oak

By TOM HARRIS
Editor

Rex Wellness Centers will build a 50-acre medical campus on White Oak Road, adjacent to the second phase of White Oak Crossing shopping center, Town officials and developers announced in a joint news conference at Garner Town Hall on Tuesday, June 18.

The complex will include a 30,000-square foot Wellness Center, 50,000 square feet of medical office space and a 40-acre continuing care-retirement facility.

"We have been looking at the Garner area for a senior care facility, wellness center and medical facility for two or three years," said Stephanie J. Wilson, president of Access Development Group, lead developer for the project. "We had several sites under consideration, then Steve Stroud enlightened us about this property and we decided to put everything together in a medical campus."

Stroud, president of Carolantic Realty and one of the Triangle's most influential

real-estate developers, also was instrumental in plans for White Oak Crossing, a \$50 million retail center now under construction near the intersection of Interstate 40 and U.S. Highway 70.

Rex Wellness Centers, part of the UNC Hospital System, is one of the state's largest medical consortiums, operating Rex Hospital in Raleigh and wellness centers in Raleigh and Cary.

Although the project still must be approved by the Rex system's Board of Trustees, Wilson said plans to

begin work on the 50-acre campus already are under way. A site plan for the first phase of the project — for the complex of medical offices — is expected to be presented to Garner's Board of Aldermen on Aug. 5.

"We're hoping to complete the first phase by next summer," Wilson said, "with two additional phases to follow."

Town officials and community leaders enthusiastically welcomed the new pro-

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ject, to be called White Oak Village.

"The White Oak area is taking off," said Town Manager Mary Lou Rand. "Construction of the first phase of White Oak Crossing is under way, and a couple of those stores will open in October. Just a week ago, we approved a plan for the second phase of the shopping center, including a Target store.

"This is another major addition, and we're extremely happy to be making this announcement."

Rand said the medical complex will provide a significant boost in future property tax revenues for the Town, in addition to the estimated \$240,000 a year to come upon completion of the retail center.

"This facility figures to be a real asset to the area," said Chamber of Commerce President Dale Bouldin. "It also figures to be a good recruiting tool for economic development in Garner."

Preliminary plans for the medical complex, to be located off White Oak Road south of the proposed Target store, call for a 40-acre retirement facility to include a community center, apartments and an assisted-living area. Medical offices will be located in the northeast corner of the 50-acre parcel, adjacent to Greenfield Parkway. The wellness center will overlook a small lake on the eastern border of the site, with additional residential sites south of the lake.

Access will be provided off White Oak Road, Greenfield Parkway and Salt Hill Road.

The Rex Wellness Center project is the latest in a series of major development projects in the White Oak area.

The first phase of the White Oak Crossing retail complex is scheduled for completion in fall 2003, although two of the complex's major tenants — B.J.'s Warehouse and Kohl's Department Store — will open in October. Other major tenants in the development's first phase include Best

Buys, T.J. Maxx, Dick's Sporting Goods, HomeGoods, Linens 'n Things and Ross Stores.

The second phase of the center, approved by the Town's Planning and Appearance Commission last week, is anchored by the Target store.

And, according to Stroud and Town officials, another major announcement is planned this week.

"One of the reasons so many things are happening out there is the great attitude at Town Hall," Stroud said June 18. "Garner welcomes business, and that enhances our ability to market the 70/40 area.

"I think you're going to be proud of what you're going to get out there."

Town meetings

Upcoming meetings for the Town of Garner:

- Wednesday, June 26 — Economic Development Advisory Committee, 4:30 p.m., Town Hall.
- Thursday, June 27 — Board of Adjustment, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall.
- Monday, July 1 — Board of Aldermen, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall.
- Monday, July 8 — Planning and Appearance Commission, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall.
- Monday, July 15 — Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall.
- Tuesday, July 16 — Board of Aldermen, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall.