

First phase of Warkworth condo project underway

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WARKWORTH – Three years of planning, meetings and negotiations have come to fruition with the first phase of a 54-unit condominium development in progress on a former orchard.

The development's three partners – president Bryce Allen, vice-president Don Clarke and secretary-treasurer David Pollack – marked the occasion with a ceremonial sod-turning Feb. 17 at the Percy Street site.

"Today is about celebration," Mr. Allen said, with an official opening of some condo units to follow in a few months.

The first four units will consist of a model suite, a sales centre and two units for sale. The development will also feature picnic areas, community gardens, walking trails, and ample parking.

"We're really pleased things have come along as well as they have," Mr. Allen said, although it took "a thousand hours and hundreds of meetings" with municipal staff, contractors and suppliers before work could begin on the 20-acre property. The installation of storm and sanitary sewers and water lines was completed just days before last Thursday's groundbreaking.

"Any connections with municipal services will be done in the spring," Mr. Allen said, along with the installation of natural gas and hydro. Construction on the first condo unit began this week, with Mr. Clarke, a local

builder, serving as the project's general contractor. Mr. Allen said he and his partners lived up to the promise they made to the municipality 37 months ago that the "special focus" of the project would be to use as many local people, suppliers and contractors as possible. "Probably in 90 per cent of the cases we have done that," he said.

Mr. Allen told reporters afterward he and Mr. Clarke had "talked about doing something like this for a long time" but it wasn't until Mr. Pollack, a chartered financial analyst, came along, that they made good on their ambition.

"We had a firm come in and do a market analysis as to what we could do and the prices that could be charged," Mr. Allen said. "It came back positive on all points ... The community needed this."

The units are aimed at the 55-plus demographic known as active adult lifestyle, Mr. Pollack said. There is no housing stock of this kind in the area but Orchard Hill will allow them to remain in the community where their family and roots are, he said.

"There are a lot of people who have large houses and gardens or farms, and they're just finding the upkeep too much for them, or they want to travel a bit more than they have been," he said. "Coming to a development such as this, where all the maintenance is done for you from the walls out ... (means) you can go to Florida for six months."

Mr. Allen said it's too early to say what the prices of the units will be, because on-site

services still have to be connected to the municipal system, and hydro has yet to be installed, but he said they would be competitive with other markets.

The condos will be built in four phases over five years, Mr. Clarke said.

Mr. Pollack said the economic spinoffs from the development include local job creation, sales for local businesses, and increasing the municipality's tax base. More than 100 people will be moving into Warkworth with money to spend, he noted.

"The municipality didn't make it easy but they were there to support us all the time," Mr. Allen said.

There were "a lot of hoops," Mr. Clarke added; one ended up being a commitment of \$125,000 by Orchard Hills toward the construction of a \$500,000 pumping station.

Mr. Allen's family once operated an orchard on 6.5 acres on the property; the remainder was also an orchard belonging to a neighbour. The land sat idle for more than 40 years.

“We're really pleased things have come along as well as they have.”
Bryce Allen

ROADS Radar speed sign calms traffic at Warkworth

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*INDEPENDENT
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TRENT HILLS – Motorists heading into Warkworth from the west have no excuse for going too fast. A radar speed sign set up near Percy Centennial School lets them know if they're travelling over the 40 km/h speed limit and tells them to slow down.

Activated just last week, it caught two speeding council members by surprise – and they were grateful for the electronic admonition.

"Certainly for me it's pretty effective," Councillor Kim McNeil drily noted, drawing laughs from her colleagues.

Coun. Bob Crate admitted he also had been caught going over the speed limit by the radar and he was so impressed by its corrective value that he suggested another of the solar-powered pieces of equipment be placed near Hastings Public School. "That's another spot where we have a problem with excess speed," he said.

Mayor Hector Macmillan said the radar speed sign is the latest initiative undertaken by Northumberland County to introduce "traffic calming measures into the community safety zone at the edge of Warkworth."

It's one of two now in use in the county. The signs cost between \$6,000 and \$8,000 apiece, Public Works Director Richard Bolduc said. The one at Warkworth was placed there, "to stop the dangerous speeding traffic in front of the school and the retirement home across the road," Mayor Macmillan said.

Mr. Bolduc told Coun. Crate he would put in a request with the County to have a sign also placed near Hastings Public School.

The Trent Hills Police Services Board supported the idea later the same day.

"I think it would be a great place for one. They really get your attention," board chairman Greg Farrant said. "I think it's a useful tool."

Northumberland OPP Detachment Commander Inspector Doug Borton warned the radar speed signs might lose their effectiveness over time. "One of the things you have to be cautious of, is if you start putting them all over the place, then they lose their impact," he said. "It becomes just another sign."