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Developers can begin work on Cape Villagio

Cape council gives final OK to condo towers, shops

By Gabriella Souza

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It took two and half years, but developers are now able to begin construction on Cape Villagio, Cape Coral's Italian-inspired condominium and retail shop project.

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City Council approved the two-building development Monday.

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"We're excited to produce a project like this for the city," said Mike Peterson, one of the project's developers.

The project, which consists of two 12-story towers, will be built at the corner of Southeast 47th Street and Southeast 17th Place in two phases. The first phase is scheduled to end in 2009, the second in 2011, said Steve Darby of Darby Engineering, which is working on the project.

In order for the project to be approved, the city had to allow deviations from city regulation on trash containers, shade tree requirements and setback areas.

"It's been a long road and there have been some bumps along the way," Peterson said.

Developer Bob Snow said the developers hadn't planned on asking for deviations. But they had also planned the project before any zoning restrictions were placed on it.

"Our intent was not to design something people didn't want to see," he said. "We tried to design something that the city wanted."

Cape Coral resident Susan Bryan thinks the project is a good idea, but she's worried about how much noise and disruption it will cause.

"I don't want to be a bah- humbug because it's a wonderful thing," she said.

Bryan's neighborhood borders Cape Villagio's northeast corner.

"We will be living with the disruption for the next five years," she said.

Cape Villagio's approval also marks a victory for the downtown Community Redevelopment Agency.

This is the agency's first major transformational project, said Suzanne Kuehn, CRA director. The CRA approved the project last month and it will be located in the CRA district.

"It's just such a wonderful evening, for us to get to this point," Kuehn said.

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