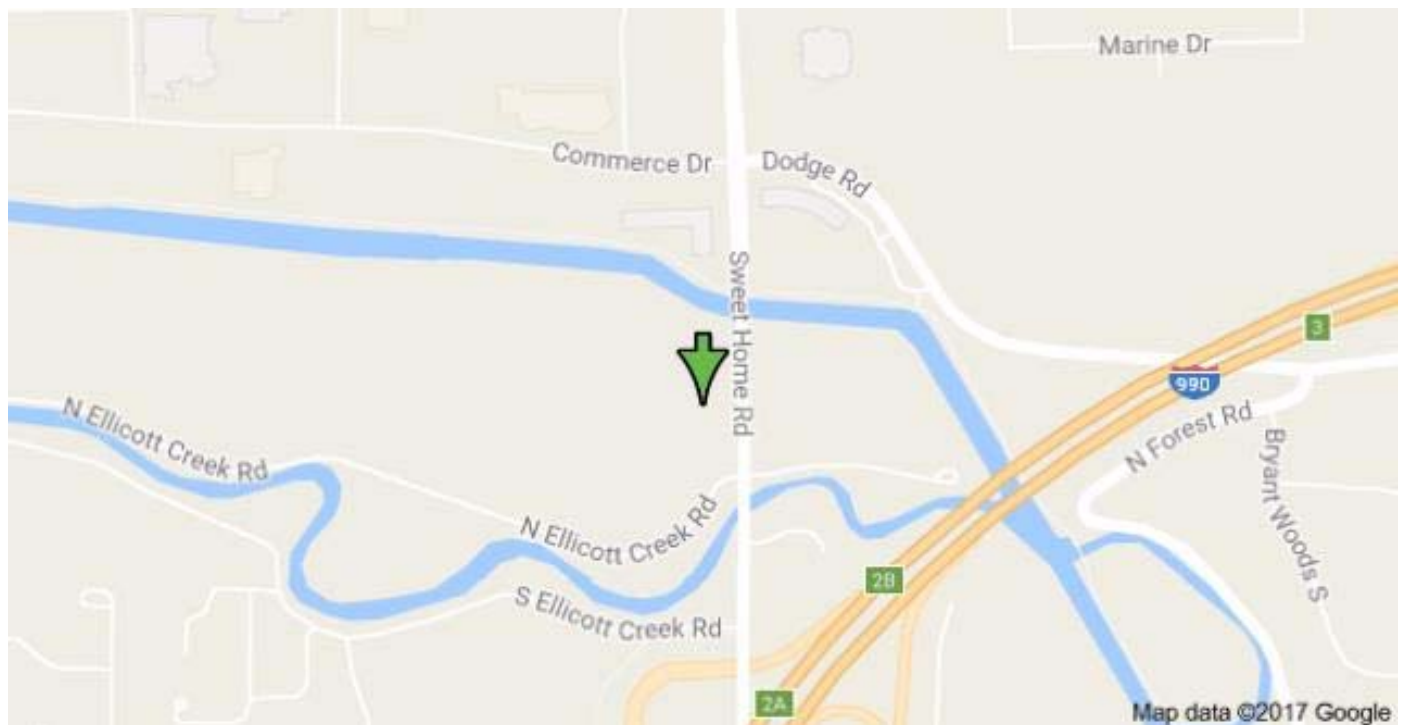


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Developer plans to build 79 apartment units on Sweet Home Road in Amherst



A Williamsville developer is asking the Town of Amherst to rezone seven acres of land along Sweet Home Road where he plans to build 79 upscale apartment units, according to plans filed with the Amherst Planning Board.

Robert A. Savarino would build two three-story apartment buildings, along with six single-story garage buildings, on seven acres of the nearly 12-acre parcel at 2360 Sweet Home Road, located just north of North Ellicott Creek Road and the Lockport Expressway interchange.

The property is zoned for office buildings and Savarino is asking the Town Board to rezone a portion of the property to multi-family residential. Sean W. Hopkins, a lawyer representing Savarino's RAS Development I LLC, said Savarino is proposing a less-intensive zoning classification for that part of the property.

There is a small office complex, called Sweet Home Commons, that primarily hosts medical-related businesses and practices on another portion of the property. Hopkins said the offices would remain in place and North Forest Office Space will continue to own and operate them.

The portion that Savarino wants to redevelop is cleared and shovel ready.

Savarino is planning to build 21 apartment units in one of the buildings and 58 units in the other. They would primarily be two-bedroom units, Hopkins said, and be priced at a market rate. The garage buildings would hold 45 spaces in all. Documents filed with the Planning Board did not provide a price tag for the project.

The town Planning Board is set to take up the project at Thursday's meeting. The Planning Board must make a recommendation on the rezoning before the Town Board issues a decision. The project then goes back to the Planning Board for site plan approval.

Savarino met with neighbors of the property last week and, based on requests they made to him, he plans to tell the Planning Board on Thursday that he will submit a modified version of the project plans that attempts to address neighbors' concerns at February's board meeting, Hopkins said.

If the project wins the necessary approvals, construction could begin in the summer and be completed next year.