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Beazer Homes' new Seneca Hill townhouses start at \$393,990 in Germantown *by Virginia Terhune Staff writer*

Construction is under way for Beazer Homes' new townhouse community, Seneca Hill, off Mateny Road in Germantown.

Approved is a plan for 104 townhouses on an 8.5-acre site between Mateny Road and Cinnamon Drive north of Clopper Road that previously was a neighborhood shopping center.

Townhouses start at \$393,990, and incentives are being offered to buyers who move in within 30 days, said Matt Violette, a Beazer sales representative working in the model unit onsite.

As of Monday, 16 units had been sold, he said.

"This means we'll have some [upper end] models and some new refreshing families," said Michael Moxley, who has lived in the neighboring Stone Ridge community for more than a decade.

Tucked in one corner of the site near the adjacent 7-11 store is a small family graveyard, which must be maintained as a condition of approval to build the complex.

In 1832, William Musser moved from Lancaster County in Pennsylvania to the Germantown area and farmed the land that includes the Beazer site and the nearby Germantown Park neighborhood, formerly called Cinnamon Woods. Musser was the son of George Musser and Anna Maria Graff, and members of the Musser and Graff families, along with friends and servants, are buried there.

The Beazer Homes site was rezoned from a commercial to a residential category in July 2010, enabling construction of townhouses in place of retail stores.

At the time, the shopping center had a beer and wine store, a dry cleaner and a satellite station for the Montgomery County Police, according to a 2010 rezoning request.

Moxley said he remembers when the center was anchored by a Weis grocery store, but it didn't get the support it needed, he said.

Weis leased its space to Super Grand in 2004, according to the zoning decision.

However, the recession hit in 2008 and a fire closed the grocery store for about a year, according to the decision. The struggling center also ran into stiff competition from other retail centers, which also took their toll.

Beazer Homes eventually bought the site and won approval to build the townhouses.

The Musser-Graff graveyard was at one time a county-designated historic site, but it was later taken off the county list, according to the Beazer Homes preliminary plan.

"However, the Germantown Historical Society still considers the cemetery historic and requests its preservation," according to the plan.

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