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March 26
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Developer agrees to make Lehigh County apartment complex accessible

Parkland View Apartments found in violation of Fair Housing Act.

Author: 69 News, (follow: @69news), news@wfmz.com

Published: Mar 10 2014 11:55:48 AM EDT | Updated On: Mar 10 2014 02:08:09 PM EDT

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Apartment building entrance at Parkland View Apartments in Upper Macungie Twp., Lehigh Co.

UPPER MACUNGIE TWP., Pa. - Developers and management of an apartment complex in Lehigh County have agreed to make the community accessible.

The 378-unit Parkland View Apartments at 1055 Cetronia Rd. in Upper Macungie Township were found to be in violation of the Federal Fair Housing Act's accessibility requirements.

Developer Kushner Real Estate Group, S/K Cetronia Associates, LP, Majic Pennsylvania Corp., and Minno & Wasko, Architects & Planners, P.C. signed an agreement that will result in extensive alterations to the complex.

The Fair Housing Council of Suburban Philadelphia (FHCSF) will also receive \$55,000 to cover a portion of the costs incurred to bring about the agreement.

According to a news release, the FHCSF conducted an investigation in 2011 and 2012 that uncovered violations that precluded wheelchair users and people with other mobility requirements from renting nearly all first floor units at the apartments.

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During its investigation, the group found steps leading to entrances and excessively high thresholds on the outside of the buildings.

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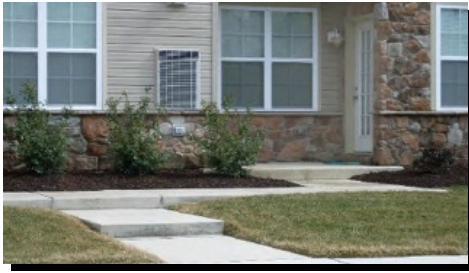
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Inside the apartments, electrical outlets were installed at inaccessible locations and elevation changes made the patios inaccessible.

In addition, violations were seen in the complex's clubhouse, mail room, pool computer room, fitness room, sidewalks and parking lots.

According to the Fair Housing Act, seven basic design elements must be met:

- 1) An accessible building entrance on an accessible route;
- 2) Accessible public and common use areas;
- 3) Usable doors (usable by a person in a wheelchair);
- 4) Accessible route into and through the dwelling unit;
- 5) Light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats and other environmental controls in accessible locations;
- 6) Reinforced walls in bathrooms for later installation of grab bars; and
- 7) Kitchens and bathrooms must be usable-that is, designed and constructed so an individual in a wheel-chair can maneuver in the space provided.

"Despite the fact that accessibility requirements have been in place for over 22 years, we continue to see violations like those at Parkland View Apartments throughout southeast Pennsylvania," said Megan Bolin, FHCSF outreach and communications coordinator.

Between 2005 and 2013, FHCSF investigated 38 new construction apartments and condominiums in the region and found that 18 communities (47%) did not meet the minimum standards required under the Fair Housing Act.

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