

2 bids made for Brookdale College land

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MIDDLETOWN — Two area contractors made bids to Brookdale Community College yesterday on the college's controversial offer of a land parcel on Phalanx and Newman Springs roads.

The 5.8-acre lot is land residents said they were assured never would be developed when they moved into their homes neighboring the college campus.

The low bid of \$730,000 came from C.J. Hesse Inc. of Belford. No one from the company returned phone calls yesterday.

Site Development Inc. of Mount Laurel presented the higher bid of \$1.5 million. A company spokesman said he could not comment on how the land would be used if the college accepts its offer.

Many residents said the college or real estate agents told them before they purchased their homes in

the neighborhood that the lot, adjacent to the Lincroft School, would remain open space. Some residents said they heard it from the township.

Residents said they only recently found out when the lot was advertised for bids that it had been zoned "neighborhood village commercial" since 1994. The township ordinance would allow the land to be developed with a small office building or bank. Anything more would have to receive zoning board approval. College officials said the bidders did not indicate what their intentions were for the property.

The board will review the applications and make a full evaluation of both bidders, said Chic Raimondi, Brookdale's director of purchasing. The next board of trustees meeting is at 7:30 p.m. July 7. The location has yet to be announced.

Fed-up residents vowed to attend the next trustees meeting. A group of opponents have collected more

than 900 signatures on a petition and said they planned to get about 1,000 more.

Angelo Grigoli said that when he moved into the neighborhood 22 years ago, he was always told the college would never build on that property.

"Brookdale owes something to the community," he said. "It's \$1.5 million to the college, but it's nothing compared to what the residents are going to have to live with."

If the land is developed, residents fear it will add nightmarish traffic problems to an already bad situation.

"There's too much development as it is," said Carol Baker, another resident. "My own observation in collecting signatures is that 99 percent of the people in Lincroft are opposed to further development."

Baker said she was also told when she moved in 13 years ago that there would be nothing to

worry about when she asked whether the property would be developed.

Brookdale is selling the land to finance the construction of a new student life center expected to open April 2001.

The student life center will cost an estimated \$12.5 million and once the bonding expenses are included, the total will be around \$13.8 million, George Fehr, chief financial officer for the school.

The college will finance \$2.5 million from the sale of the property and from auxiliary services such as food services and the college store.

The bulk of the balance will be paid through a bond financed through the Educational Facilities Authority, which the college will repay over the next 25 years, Fehr said. The remaining portion will be budgeted in the college's minor capital allocations funds, game room receipts and excess revenues from the new student life center's college store and food services.