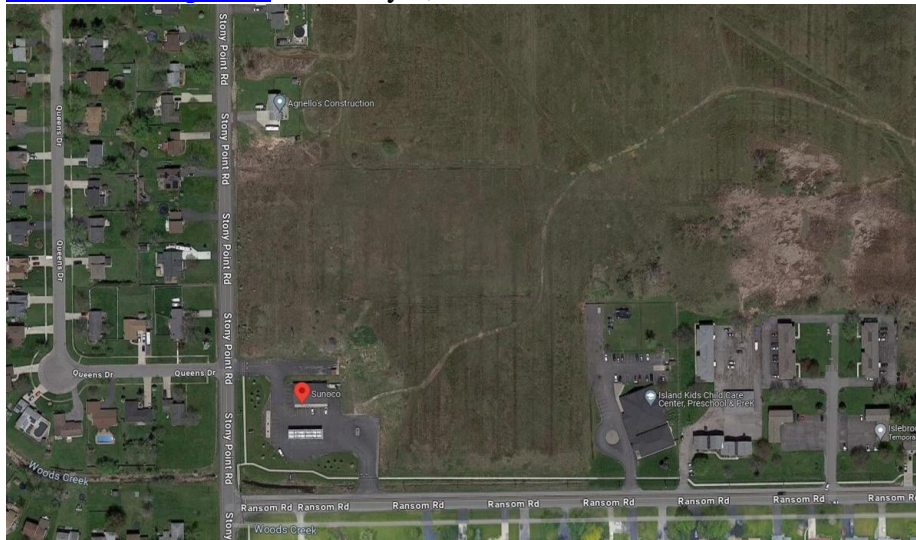


# Former Noco co-owner Michael Newman plans new residential complex on Grand Island

- [Jonathan D. Epstein](#) January 9, 2024



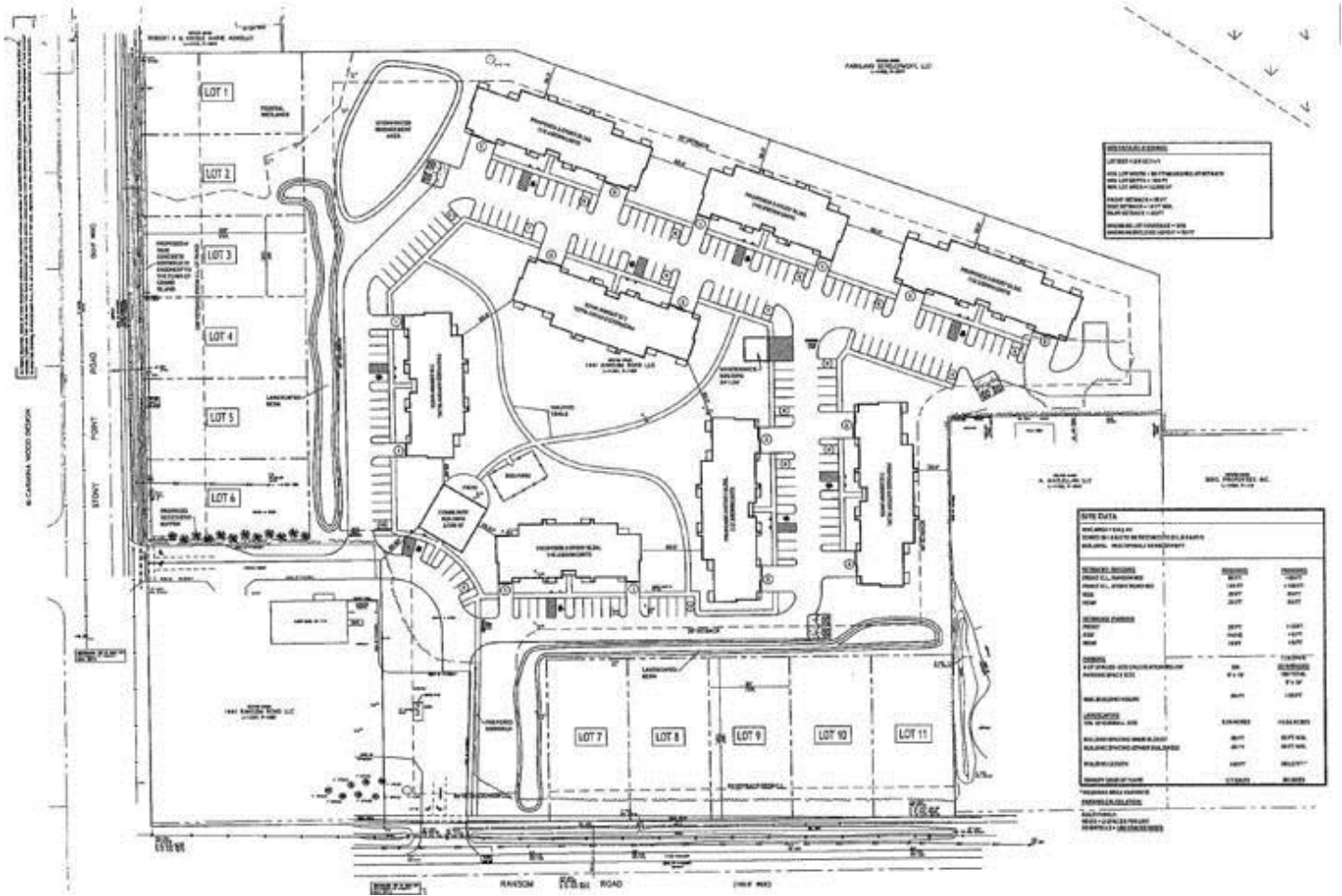
1441 Ransom Road includes the Sunoco gas station and mini-mart plus 13 acres of vacant land around it.

After years in the gas station and fuel business, one of the former owners of Noco Energy Corp. is venturing into a new and vastly different arena: housing development. Four years after splitting off from his brother to form his own retail energy and real estate company, Michael F. Newman is seeking to redevelop a large piece of land on Grand Island that is located behind a gas station and convenience store that he also owns.

Newman Properties – an Amherst-based developer and retail distributor of branded fuel, petroleum equipment and maintenance – wants to reuse 12.9 acres at the northeast corner of Ransom and Stony Point roads, creating 90 apartments and 11 single-family homes. The site is adjacent to the Grand Island Market and Sunoco gas station at 1441 Ransom. In all, Newman owns 14.3 acres at the intersection, where it acquired the gas station in 2020, followed by the rest of the land. The gas station and convenience store are leased to a business operator.

Plans call for breaking up the empty site into 11 single-family lots – five stretching along Ransom and six along Stony Point, on either side of the gas station and mini-mart – while constructing eight two-story apartment buildings on the landlocked remainder in back. All of the apartments would have two bedrooms, but five of the buildings would have 12 units, while three would have 10 apartments. Rents would range from \$1,700 to \$2,400 per month, said Tim Boyle, president of Noco Property Management.

A 2,500-square-foot community building with a rear patio and an adjacent dog park is also planned near the entrance to the complex, which would be off Stony Point next to the gas station. Also, the project will feature 199 parking spaces, including 29 in garages.



A site plan for an apartment and single-family home development on 13 acres at 1441 Ransom Road.

The project has been in the works for at least a year, but is a significant reduction from what was unveiled last summer. At the time, Newman proposed 12 two-story buildings with 130 apartments, plus 7,000 square feet of neighborhood retail space in one building along Ransom. The project also would have included 6.3 acres of open space. But neighbors objected to the density and commercial space, and wanted a buffer between their homes and the apartment buildings, Boyle said. "It's a busy intersection with the school buses," he said, noting that Grand Island Senior High School is down the street. "The neighbors were apprehensive to bring more commercial."

So Newman removed the mixed-use building and commercial space, as well as three apartment buildings along the streets, replacing them with the two clusters of single-family homes. That brought the apartment count down by 40 units. The project cost is still being determined, but Boyle estimated it at \$25 million to \$30 million. Newman is asking the town to rezone the land to a combination of single-family residential, multi-family residential and "general business district." Besides the rezoning, the project will also require site plan approval and various other town, county and state permits, including for wetlands. A public hearing has been set for Jan. 16 at 8 p.m.

The project is one of the biggest ventures by Michael Newman since he split off from his brother, James, in 2019, and left his family business, Noco Energy Corp. – originally named Newman Oil Co. Until 2019, it also used to own 37 Noco gas stations in the Buffalo and Rochester areas, before it sold them all to Marathon Petroleum Corp. That's when the brothers decided to divide the remaining businesses, with James taking the commercial and industrial side, while Michael kept the retail gas station supply and property management businesses

