

[Return to Story](#)[Print This Page](#)[Larger text](#)[Smaller text](#)

Developer seeks tax credits for senior housing in Brownsville

By [Liz Zemba](#)

Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2015, 11:12 p.m.

A Pittsburgh real estate developer will seek federal low-income housing tax credits to help finance a proposed \$7 million senior housing complex in downtown Brownsville.

The Fayette County Redevelopment Authority on

Wednesday approved an agreement with TREK Development Group that gives the company permission to seek the tax credits through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency for three parcels on Market Street.

If TREK's application for the tax credits is successful, the company will buy the three parcels at 5, 17 and 21 Market St. from the authority for \$1, according to Andrew French, authority director. TREK has until 2016 to secure the tax credits.

The authority acquired the dilapidated buildings, along with at least 25 others, through eminent domain and tax sales. Some were formerly owned by Allegheny County developers Ernest and Marilyn Liggett.

Trey Barbour, TREK project manager, said the company wants to put a 45,000-square-foot senior housing community on the site. It would have 24 apartments on the upper floors, with room for retail space on the first floor.

Barbour said TREK wants to renovate the building at 5 Market St., which he said housed a G.C. Murphy store at one time. Buildings on the other two sites would be demolished.

The roof on at least one of the other two-story buildings is collapsing, Barbour said.

If TREK is awarded the tax credits, Barbour said, the company will hold community meetings for input on the building's exterior design.

"Our intent is to mimic the historic look of the buildings," Barbour said. A more contemporary design would be considered, he said.

The project is the second of its kind that TREK proposed for Brownsville. French said the company sought tax credits for a similar structure that was to be built at the former Union Station, but was unsuccessful.

TREK has a better chance of securing the tax credits for the new project because it is in a more prominent location and is nearer to other redevelopment projects underway in town, including a park, Barbour said.

In a related matter, the authority approved selling a former funeral home at 126 Front Street to Joseph L. Terry of Dearborn, Mich., for \$1,000.

French said Terry will "invest a substantial amount" into demolishing the funeral home and renovating a garage and apartment on the lots for residential use.

Connie Gore, a Brownsville resident who owns property on Front Street near the former funeral home, said the funeral home has been the site of drug deals and break ins in the years since it was abandoned.

"What Mr. Terry proposes will only be an improvement," Gore said.

Lester Ward, Brownsville mayor, and James Lawver, council president, said they support both projects.

"I've always said, show me the money and a plan, and he (Terry) has done that," said Lawver. "We've talked with Trey Barbour and his company. They're a reputable company, and we support what he's trying to do."

Liz Zemba is a staff writer for Trib Total Media. She can be reached at 412-601-2166 or

lzemba@tribweb.com.



Copyright © 2015 — Trib Total Media