

Redevelopment authority approves improvement projects

By Amy Revak HeraldStandard.com | Posted: Friday, October 7, 2011 2:00 am

The Fayette County Redevelopment Authority on Thursday approved agreements for construction of housing units for the homeless in Uniontown and street scape improvements in Brownsville totaling nearly \$900,000.

The authority approved a cooperation agreement with Fayette County to submit an application to the state HOME Investment Partnerships program to support \$600,000 in funding for the third phase of City Mission-Living Stones Inc.'s Liberty Park development in Uniontown.

Executive director Andrew French said the authority has assisted City Mission with the first two phases, and the third phase involves building six units of housing in the East End section to assist homeless people.

The authority also approved a reimbursement agreement with the state Department of Transportation for a project to enhance Market Street on Brownsville's North Side.

French said the \$289,455 street scape program will include sidewalk and crosswalk improvements and moving utilities from the front to the rear of buildings on Market Street. He said the authority has been working on the project for years.

In other matters, the authority approved the single audit report for the year ending December 2010. The report was prepared by Maher Duessel of Pittsburgh.

While assets went down, grant money increased.

At the end of 2010, the authority's assets stood at \$6.6 million, while at the end of 2009, the authority had \$10.2 million in assets.

However, the authority received \$8.6 million in Community Development Block Grant funding in 2010, compared to \$6.3 million in funding in 2009. The extra money was a result of the federal economic stimulus money the authority received.

"I anticipate it won't be as significant this year," French said.

The authority administers various grants, including CDBG money for infrastructure improvements, homeowner rehabilitation and home-buyer assistance and weatherization programs for low-income people. The authority is also developing the Fayette County Business Park in South Union Township.

French said Maher Duessel gave the authority a “clean audit,” although there was still one lingering finding that likely will be in the report every year.

The finding is a recurring conclusion that has appeared in the last five audits, French said. It deals with a government requirement regarding the preparation of financial statements.

The finding states that the authority is not complying with a rule that took effect in early 2006 that states someone other than the auditor must prepare a financial statement for the authority.

French said the requirement is somewhat burdensome for smaller agencies and the authority would either have to hire another firm to do pre-audit work or have a full-time certified public accountant on staff. He said the auditors prepare the documents for the audit and the authority staff is comfortable with helping them do that.