

## Redevelopment authority takes action on Brownsville properties

By Amy Revak HeraldStandard.com | Posted: Wednesday, November 2, 2011 2:00 am

The Fayette County Redevelopment Authority took action Tuesday toward the ongoing effort to revitalize downtown Brownsville.

During the monthly meeting, the authority separately voted to deposit money with the Fayette County Court of Common Pleas to acquire 22 properties, demolish a property on Market Street and to approve an agreement to help complete a commercial historic district study.

The authority approved the deposit of \$292,800 with the court for the properties formerly owned by Ernest E. and Marilyn K. Liggett and their subsidiaries. The buildings are found on various locations on Market Street, Front Street, High Street, Brownsville Avenue and Albany Road.

Executive director Andrew French said the authority acquired the properties through eminent domain and all of the cases have been satisfied. He said the properties were targeted as a part of the Brownsville redevelopment project to improve the blighted downtown area.

French said the money must be paid to the court, which will determine how the money is distributed to pay outstanding bills such as back taxes.

“We’re just a conduit. The courts will make that decision,” Chairman Ken Finney said of how the money is distributed.

The authority also voted to approve a mitigation agreement with the state historic preservation officer regarding the demolition of 18-24 Market St. French said the site was targeted for demolition to open the entire side of the street and deal with the “tremendous blight” in the historic district. He said the building formerly housed a hardware store.

As part of the agreement, the authority also voted to provide \$35,000 for the completion of the Brownsville Commercial Historic District re-evaluation study.

French said the study will provide a concrete plan on which buildings will be demolished and seeks permission from the state Historic Museum Commission to

demolish historic buildings. The study is being conducted by the National Road Heritage Corridor.

French said the authority has identified buildings that are “infeasible to rehabilitate.”

In other business, the authority voted to approve a contract for professional legal services with Goldberg, Kamin and Garvin LLP of Pittsburgh. French said although Herb Margolis is the authority’s solicitor, the contract with the Pittsburgh firm is for any additional legal services that are needed. The rate is \$115 an hour. French said the authority isn’t paying a retainer, only an hourly rate.