

Redevelopment authority acts to bring in \$4 million for projects

Amy Revak Herald-Standard | Posted: Thursday, December 9, 2010 4:00 am

The Fayette County Redevelopment Authority took action Tuesday to seek funding totaling nearly \$4 million for various projects, including a infrastructure improvements, weatherization work and a proposed recreation center in North Union Township. The authority approved the submission of a proposal to the state requesting \$750,000 to be used toward a recreation center in North Union Township. The funding is being requested through the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) and is being released by outgoing Gov. Ed Rendell.

Authority executive director Andrew French said the township supervisors previously dedicated \$400,000 of Community Development Block Grant money for the project; secured an additional \$750,000; and earlier this year adopted an ordinance to borrow \$1.3 million for the proposed center.

French said once all of the funding is secured, it would be a project totaling more than \$3 million.

French said the authority has been working with the township and plans to put the project out to bid in February.

The supervisors previously bought a 2.7-acre lot on Commonwealth Drive for \$115,000 on which to build the center.

Two years ago, the supervisors held a meeting about plans for the gathering place that would include a gymnasium, weight and exercise room and a multipurpose activity room.

John Over Jr., president of K2 Engineering in Uniontown, the township's engineering firm, previously explained that the building would be constructed in two phases. The first phase would contain a 7,000-square-foot gym, a 750-square-foot weightlifting and exercise room, locker rooms, restrooms and a 1,000-square-foot multipurpose room, which also would serve as a community room and senior citizens activity room.

A baby-sitting service also would be available for people using the center.

The second phase would house municipal offices and a conference room, and have room for a tax collector's office and a state representative's office.

In a related matter pertaining to funding, the authority approved submission of a proposal for \$2 million through the same RACP program for infrastructure improvement at the undeveloped portion of the Fayette County Business Park. Fayette County Commissioners Vincent Zapotosky and Vincent A. Vicites previously announced the money was being allocated.

French said the money was obtained because of a "large advocacy effort" by both the authority and county officials. The money will be used to help develop the next phase, which is west of Matthew Drive Extension in South Union Township and "prepare additional lots for development."

The business park was deeded to the redevelopment authority by the county in 2000, and since that time numerous businesses have located at the 270-acre property.

The board also voted to submit the 2010-2011 weatherization grant application to the state Department of Community and Economic Development in the amount of \$608,009. French said the proposed work plan includes weatherizing 24 houses in the next year and to provide assistance to 195 homes through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for crisis situations.

French said the county also received an additional \$2 million allocation from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that will be spent in the next 12 months that will help between 200 and 230 more homes obtain weatherization work.

In a related issue, the authority approved hiring Charles Miller and Javier Datiz as full-time weatherization installers at annual salaries of \$20,800 each, plus benefits. French said the men had been working as part-time installers since August.

An agreement was approved between the authority and City Mission-Living Stones Inc., providing \$105,000 through the Emergency Shelter Grant Program to support operations for homeless in the county.

The authority also approved an agreement between the authority and Fayette County Community Action Agency to provide \$500,000 in funding through the HOME Investment Partnerships Program for a project in North Union Township to build an apartment complex near the former state police station.