

Razing to turn warehouse into housing to begin after Labor Day

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By MARK MARONEY (mmaroney@sungazette.com), Williamsport Sun-Gazette

The first stage of demolition of the Brodart warehouse at 1609 Memorial Avenue will begin Wednesday, according to city officials.

Shea Construction, of Scranton, will begin to take the building apart on the Scott Street side, according to John Grado, city engineer and director of community and economic development.

That's the section nearest the large chimney stack, but residents needn't worry, he said. The demolition team will be taking parts of the building down from the inside first, Grado said.

A fence has been put up around the perimeter of the building bordering Scott Street, Memorial Avenue and Oliver Street, he said.

Asbestos abatement has been completed and any infestation has been exterminated, according to Joe Gerardi, city codes administrator.

The demolition, including the crushing of brick and building materials for about a week in October, is a process that will be loud and noisy for neighbors and is expected to take until early November.

City Council Thursday unanimously approved the land development plan by NRP Group of Cleveland, Ohio.

Once the demolition takes place, a process that will last until early November, ground will be broken prior to Veterans Day on Memorial Homes, a 40-unit apartment complex, according to William Kelly, deputy director of the Lycoming County Department of Planning and Community Development.

Kelly attended the meeting and told the Sun-Gazette among the activities of Memorial Homes will be a Brodart Neighborhood Improvement project.

The group typically meets regularly and discusses what owners of properties in that demolition area want to see planned in their neighborhoods. A number of the properties are getting upgrades to their code deficiencies, such as improved sidewalks, fences, railings and other structural improvements.

Council was on board with the Memorial Homes project because it used tax credits through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency to pay for a majority of the costs of the apartments.

Once the apartments are built in a year the next phase is to construct 32 townhouses. That is a process that will take about five years, give or take, while the townhouses are marketed to prospective buyers, according to the NRP builders.

Kelly said he's excited about the potential link of Memorial Homes to Memorial Park, and officials are examining how to make the park more accessible and more attractive to new and existing residents.