

Committee reviews push for Brodart project

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By R.A. WALKER - rwalker@sungazette.com

City Council's Housing Needs Committee voted to recommend a resolution of support for the Brodart Commons Revitalization Project Wednesday.

The resolution will be on tonight's council agenda and - if approved - leaves open the possibility of developing the Brodart warehouse property on Memorial Avenue for multiple uses, including residential or commercial adaptive reuse of some of the complex.

The city will have a role in the project, as will the county, because of the need to seek grant funding for demolition and abatement of any environmental hazards left behind from past uses, among them a silk mill operation in the early 1900s.

Article Photos



Also designated as a partner is the Greater Lycoming Habitat for Humanity, the organization was first approached by the Brodart company with the suggestion that the large tract of land be used to construct up to 25 Habitat homes.

The scope of the initiative has changed since the initial offer to Habitat. The resolution voted on Wednesday differs from an earlier version tabled several weeks ago so revisions could be made that leave open the possibility of multiple uses and a mix of public and private partners.

It remains to be seen what will be done with the massive complex, which includes connected structures built in different eras.

The complex was acquired by Brodart about 60 years ago and is used for warehousing operations that eventually will be absorbed by the company's McElhattan operation.

Brodart is willing to turn the property over for a nominal sale price, according to city officials, but the size of the complex is such that demolition and site preparation will require millions in grant funding.

The county is using grant funding to conduct environment testing of the site.

The committee members voting to recommend the resolution to the full council were Councilman and Committee Chairman Skip Smith, Councilwoman Liz Miele and Councilman Randall Allison.