

Senior housing gets \$500,000+ in tax credits

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Natural gas impact fees are going to help to build a senior citizen apartment complex for those seeking to downsize, according to state lawmakers and city officials.

More than \$545,000 in tax credits was awarded through the state Housing Financing Agency in Harrisburg toward construction of Grove Street Commons. The proposed 32-unit apartment complex is eyed for 1290 Grove St, said state Rep. Rick Mirabito, D-Williamsport. The three-story building is designed for seniors 62 years of age and older, he said. The proposed building will consist of 28 one-bedroom units and four two-bedroom units and will feature an elevator to help residents access the second and third floors.



A land development plan has been drafted by the SEDA-Council of Governments Housing Development Corp., said John Grado, city engineer and director of community and economic development.

City Council President Bill Hall said council saw the building plans and has liked what it sees in nearby communities, such as Mill Race Commons in Montoursville. "The intent is to provide housing for elderly people who own their own homes and who are thinking of downsizing," Hall said. "The apartments could provide worry-free living without concerns some seniors have about shoveling sidewalks and mowing grass. It's not like a nursing home where one must give up everything," Hall said.

State Senator Gene Yaw, R-Loyalsock Township, credited the partnership between the city and county commissioners seeing the opportunity to use natural gas impact fees for this purpose.

"I was pleased to lend my support for this project application," Yaw said. "As a result of the increased development in the Marcellus Shale formation, Williamsport and the surrounding area has experienced a housing shortage. The response was creation of the city Housing Strategy, developed in partnership with the city and county to identify housing needs as a result of gas industry impact, he said.

Overall, the agency awarded \$16.8 million in low-income housing tax credits and \$1.9 million in PennHOMES funding for the construction of affordable multifamily housing developments located in urban centers throughout the state.

"This newly funded housing will benefit low- and moderate-income families, senior citizens and people with special housing needs," said Brian A. Hudson Sr., executive director and CEO of the PHFA. "Communities thrive when housing is available for people at various income levels, and the funding announced today helps fill that important need."

"The county is delighted to help the city reverse the erosion of the property tax base while providing excellent quality housing to our seniors," said Commissioner Jeff Wheeland. "We appreciate the opportunity to be in partnership with the city and SEDA COG Housing Development Corp.," said Commissioner Ernie Larson.

"We are extremely pleased to learn about award of housing tax credits to the SEDA COG Housing Development Corp for the Grove Street Commons senior affordable housing project," said Commissioner Tony Mussare of the third component in the city's housing strategy.