

Borough council members express support for Fayette County Redevelopment Authority plan

By Nicole Lemal nlemal@heraldstandard.com | Posted: Wednesday, August 14, 2013 2:00 am

BROWNSVILLE — Borough council members said they are anxious to see a “long and drawn out process” in the downtown area come to fruition in the near future.

Several dilapidated buildings in the downtown area that pose a safety hazard to residents could be demolished, under the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority’s proposed plan.

In its plan, the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority has identified 13 buildings that could be demolished or rehabilitated based on the costs.

At this point, the redevelopment authority recommends seven of those buildings should be demolished, according to executive director Andrew French.

Buildings set for demolition could be replaced with greenery and later used for development, French said.

Grant money was obtained from the state’s Department of Community & Economic Development several years ago for this purpose.

Community members and stakeholders shared their input of this plan during a Fayette County Redevelopment Authority meeting held Tuesday afternoon, including several council members.

Many residents urged the redevelopment authority to proceed quickly with the project, expressing their concern for their safety.

French couldn’t offer a definitive answer as to when the buildings could be addressed but said the redevelopment authority is looking to move “expediently.”

Present for the discussion and presentation, Councilwoman Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich explained the importance of being involved in the process.

“This is near and dear to many people’s hearts, and we hope to be moving forward in doing this,” Zivkovich said.

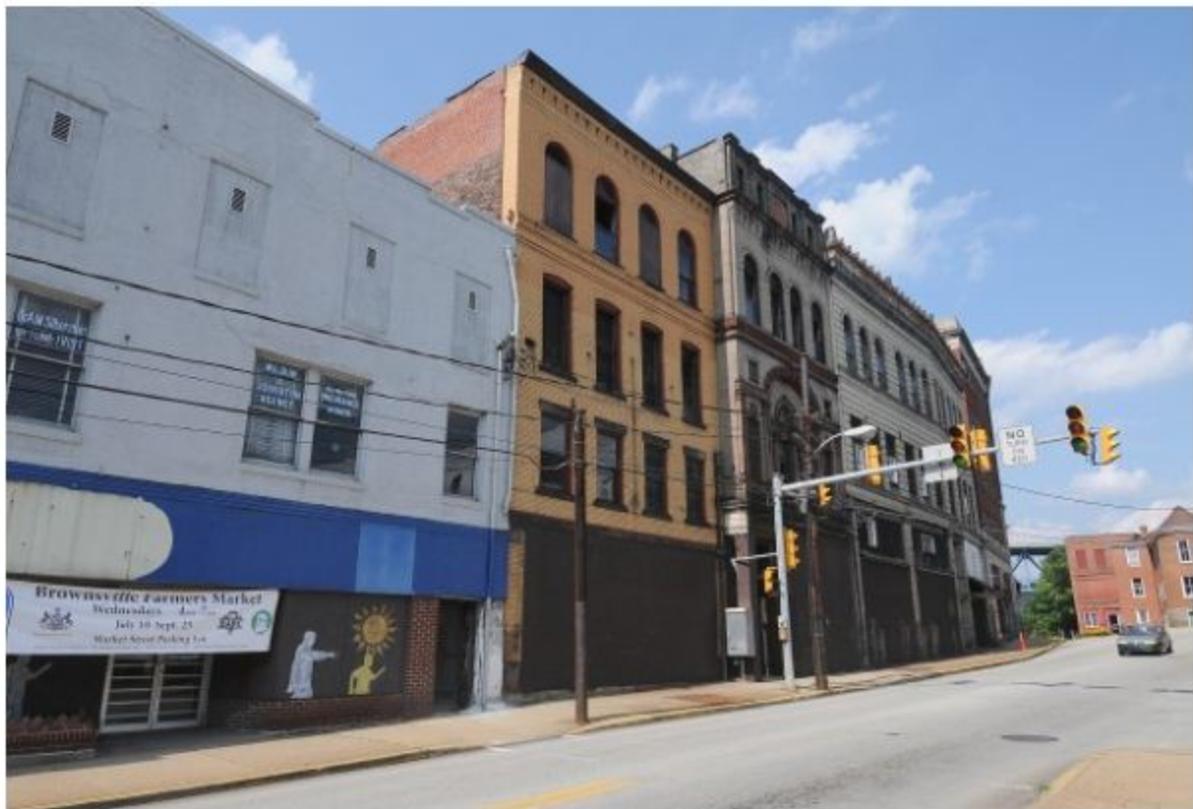
Councilman James Lawver suggested that council send a letter to Fayette County Commissioner Angela M. Zimmerlink, requesting her extended support in the project.

During the redevelopment authority meeting, Zimmerlink said it is “on the right track” and the timeline for reaching that point was irrelevant.

Based on the current proposal, Zimmerlink said she would be willing to write letters in support of the project.

Mayor Lester Ward suggested council get involved as well and prepare its own letter to send to Fayette County commissioners. Residents were urged to attend the public meeting, which has yet to be scheduled.

“We’re moving forward with it, and like Tracy said, it has been a long drawn out process, and we’ll get through it,” President Jack Lawver said.



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Dilapidated buildings

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A proposed plan prepared by the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority recommends that seven buildings in the Brownsville downtown area be scheduled for demolition, while six other buildings are preserved.