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Redevelopment authority director explains need for housing analysis

By Amy Karpinsky, Herald-Standard
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The executive director of the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority explained the need for a countywide housing analysis Thursday, saying that the complete and comprehensive study is a part of the county's comprehensive plan.

During the county commissioners meeting, Raymond C. Polaski said the analysis will include a "complete and comprehensive study of all housing in the county and will make predictions for future housing needs."

He said 1990 and 2000 Census information will be used in the study.

Polaski said housing is economic development and the construction industry creates jobs and is one of the most stable parts of the economy. The Fayette County Housing Consortium, which includes various housing redevelopment authorities, realtors, homebuilders and banks, is a collaborative effort to address housing planning issues in the county.

The issue first arose during Tuesday's agenda meeting, when the commissioners were asked to place on Thursday's agenda a motion to authorize advertising for quotes for consultation services to develop a countywide housing market analysis. During Tuesday's discussion, most of the items centered on the need for housing for executives for businesses, although the analysis would include all housing stock.

In response to an editorial published Wednesday against the analysis, Commissioner Sean M. Cavanagh said editorials

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shouldn't dictate county policy and commission chairman Vincent A. Vicites said the comments made at the agenda meeting were only about a narrow scope of the project.

Tuesday's comments mostly centered on the need for housing for business executives. Commissioner Ronald M. Nehls said there are not a lot of private investors going into realm of housing construction and the study is needed.

Polaski said the \$70,000 for the analysis will come from a variety of sources, including grants of \$30,000 from the state Department of Community and Economic Development, \$20,000 from the Appalachian Regional Commission, \$15,000 from a local community foundation and \$5,000 from consortium dues.

The group meets monthly to discuss housing issues, Polaski said. "Part of the comprehensive plan has to be a look at housing," he said. "Without statistics we have no edge to get housing in the community."

The items that will be included in the project will include the types of housing available such as public and assisted housing, single and multi family units and elderly housing including assisted living and personal care facilities; location and condition of the existing housing; housing market trends such as homeownership rates, rent levels and vacancy rates, home sale prices and new construction activities; area demographics and anticipated future economic growth.

The commissioners unanimously approved the motion to advertise for quotes for consultation services to develop the housing analysis.

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