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## Fayette redevelopment authority's executive director to retire

By Paul Sunyak, Herald-Standard  
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The Fayette County Redevelopment Authority's executive director is retiring after six years, but is amenable to staying on part time to gestate full build out of the business park that serves as the jewel of his tenure.

Raymond C. Polaski, who will step down Feb. 1 to devote more time to his family, personal and other interests, told his board Tuesday that he's willing to continue working two days a week on special with heavy emphasis on the park.

Hired to replace the late and legendary Wayland Smith as top administrator at the county redevelopment authority, Polaski's tenure is closely associated with the rapid development of the Fayette County Business Park located on Route 40 near Uniontown Mall.

In three years under Polaski's guidance, the former county home property has been transformed from underutilized farmland into the county's premiere hot spot for commercial development, with seven projects currently in the pipeline.

In the process, its 277 available acres have dwindled to approximately 90, of which only 60 are still earmarked for commercial development. Board chairman Kenneth L. Finney, who along with long-time board member Ross DiMarco interviewed and hired Polaski, commended the progress achieved during his stewardship.

"You've done a tremendously great job. I am pleased with the job you've done at the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority," said Finney, who ticked off accomplishments such as the business park, the Brownsville Wharf project, the introduction of a first-time homebuyers program and continued success acquiring state Community Development Block Grant funds.

DiMarco told Finney, "I think you've said it all, very well," before adding, "I'm happy that Ray's going to hang around for a couple more years" to see the business park completed.

However, that deal won't be finalized until the Feb. 1 board meeting, where Andrew French, who was elevated from assistant executive director to interim executive director at Tuesday's meeting, will present the appropriate job description for a vote.

Addressing his decision, Polaski said that at age 63, with 38 years working in community development for four agencies, he wants to take advantage of retirement while good health is still on his side.

"I would like to devote more time to my family in the eastern part of the state, a family enterprise located there, and my own personal interests and charitable organizational pursuits," said Polaski, who lists Habitat for Humanity and the St. Vincent DePaul Society in the latter category.

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Polaski previously worked in Lancaster and Allentown, and in Escambia County, Fla., prior to succ his friend and colleague Smith at the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority.

In tendering his resignation, Polaski noted that he did so with regrets, but felt that the timing was r he qualifies for a pension and Social Security benefits that should allow him to have a stable retire

Polaski said he "thoroughly enjoyed" his relationships with board members and staff, along with th county and municipal government with whom he had communication. He also noted that his "spec in the business park and a strong desire to see it completed fueled his willingness to stay on in a p capacity.

"Current plans and operational components suggest a full build out is possible by 2008, with sever thousand jobs as a potential," said Polaski, who offered to work as a "special projects employee," to the new executive director, to oversee park completion.

Polaski noted that the 2005 budget approved by the board in December allows for creation of the employee position with no detrimental financial effects. He said that's primarily due to the fact that successor as executive director will start out lower on that position's pay scale, thus freeing up mc

Finney said the board will advertise to fill its executive director vacancy and will conduct interview: finalists, following the same procedure used when Polaski was hired. French, who board member: highly of Tuesday, is virtually certain to be in that field.

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