

Court grants request for payment of Brownsville properties

By Amy Revak HeraldStandard.com | Posted: Wednesday, December 21, 2011 2:00 am

The Fayette County Redevelopment Authority on Tuesday was granted approval by President Judge Gerald R. Solomon to deposit payment for eight properties in downtown Brownsville targeted for blight.

With the payment, the authority can now take possession of the properties, which were formerly owned by Ernest and Marilyn Liggett of Monroeville.

Attorney John J. Arminas of Pittsburgh was requesting the deposit of more than \$100,000 for the properties that were obtained through eminent domain proceedings.

The request was presented in motions court. There was no one present to object to the request.

Arminas said with the payment, any entity that is owed money can now seek funds from the court to pay liens or taxes on the property. He said the remaining amount, if there is any, will be paid to the Liggetts. He said in a similar case, the borough requested payment from the court and he anticipates that the school district may also seek money.

Andrew French, redevelopment authority executive director, said with the deposit of the "just compensation," the authority can take possession of the properties. He said the titles were previously transferred to the authority.

The eight properties include two vacant lots and six buildings, French said, the most significant of which is the Union Station Building. He said the authority is paying \$110,500 for the land and buildings.

"This is one more step in the prolonged legal process to get possession of the properties targeted for acquisition in downtown Brownsville," French said.

He said because the properties are located in a National Historic District, the authority is working with the entities that deal with historic structures. He said a study is being completed that will provide a plan on which buildings will be demolished.

The authority must seek permission from the state Historic Museum Commission to any demolish historic buildings. The study is being conducted by the National Road Heritage Corridor.

French said because some of the buildings are in disrepair, they may have to be demolished.

The redevelopment authority has been working for years to obtain numerous properties in the downtown area in an attempt to revitalize the blighted downtown area.