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City OK's project tax break

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Posted: Wednesday, November 24, 2010 12:00 am

By Nick Smith
Williston Herald | 1 comment

The Williston City Commission approved a tax incentive to a developer for a proposed housing development for low income housing during its meeting Tuesday evening.

Gerry Haan, who was representing Nokota Ridge LLC, brought forward a request for a payment in lieu of taxes request for a proposed apartment complex.

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Haan was on conference call for the meeting.

Director of Tax Equalization Shawna Gooch-Egge outlined the proposal for the commission. She said the proposed apartment complex was to be located near the senior apartments going in on 26th Street West.

Gooch-Egge said Haan's request was for a 72-unit apartment complex, with 44 units being low-income and the rest at market rate. She said Haan was requesting \$1 per year for years one through five and \$200 per completed unit for years six through 15.

She said the City-County Abatement Committee's recommendation was for three years at 100 percent for the low-income units and no incentive for the

market-rate units.

DISCUSSION

Haan said he was requesting the tax break due to the difficulties in getting credit in the current economy.

"It's just very hard to get participants to get a project underway," said Haan.

Haan also clarified that the project had been revised and now only consisted of 42 low-income units "with all of these units being affordable."

Commissioner Tate Cymbaluk asked Haan what he considered to be affordable.

Haan said at the high end, a three-bedroom, 1,200 square foot apartment could go for up to \$740 per month. At the low end, he said a two-bedroom, 1,100 square foot apartment could go for approximately \$300 per month.

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Haan added that he's going to also apply for funds and tax credits to help subsidize the rents through the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency.

After further discussion, the commission voted to approve the City-County Abatement Committee's recommendation for three years at 100 percent, with the stipulation of construction beginning within 12 months.

The vote was unanimous, by a five votes to none margin.

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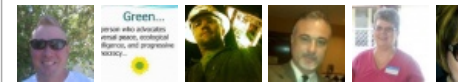
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I am excited to see that developers are finally investing in building housing that people can afford. Lets just hope that they take a different approach at who they are letting reside in these apartments than the current Williston Housing Authority. There are residents currently living in housing who have children over the age of 18 all working full-time jobs, while single parents with under age children are living with family or barely making ends meet where they are because they do not have a place to live or cannot afford the price of rent here in Williston.

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