

Goddard Block grant application public hearing zips through quietly

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UNITY — Three public hearings on a proposed application to the Community Development Finance Authority for up to \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds were held at Monday's meeting of the Sullivan County Commissioners

The grant information that is earmarked for the renovation project at the Goddard Block in Downtown Claremont zipped through with no public questions or comments.

Kevin Lacasse of New Hampton, the CEO and founder of New England Family Housing, reviewed the background of the project expected to cost about \$5 million.

When completed, the Goddard Block is expected to have a total of 30 to 35 one-bedroom, two-bedroom and efficiency apartments. Some of those apartments will be on the ground floor at the rear of the building with storefront space on the Pleasant Street side of the property.

Lacasse said the entity to own the property has yet to be formed.

"The building was beyond normal fixup," he said. "There were some pretty rough occupants in there," Lacasse added.

Lacasse said his next step in Claremont is meeting with the Claremont Planning Board on Monday, Aug. 14 seeking approval of a site plan for the property. Once that is done, building permits will be the final step locally, he added.

Lacasse said he hopes to have all the preliminary paperwork and financing in place so that the project could go out for bid by next spring signaling the start of construction.

Currently, Lacasse manages about 100 rental units in Claremont including ownership of the former Latchis Block, across Pleasant Street from the Goddard Block.

“I’m very excited to take such a prominent downtown building and make it something great,” he stated.

In other business, County Manager Derek Ferland said two groups of candidates for the open Facilities Director position at the Sullivan County complex are scheduled to be interviewed today and Friday. Interviews have been set up to meet with four candidates each day.

The County Commissioners approved the purchase of nine new tables for the dining room at the Sullivan County Health facility.

The auditors will be on site July 31 to Aug. 4 for the county’s June 30, 2017 financial closeout.

Ferland reported that work on the county parking lot on Sunapee Street in Newport is moving along nicely. Paving is scheduled this week with installation of curbing next week, he stated.

The next County Commissioners meeting will be held at 3 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 7 in Newport.