

Village looks deeper into housing possibilities

Written by Deb Egenberger
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It rarely takes more than a few hours from the time a rental house in Brady is vacated until new tenants are shuffling their belongings in.

The demand for housing is not new in the village or for smaller communities across the region, said Karl Elmshaeuser, executive director of West Central Nebraska Development District.

Elmshaeuser helped the Brady board of trustees assess village housing needs and begin a development plan during the regular monthly meeting on Oct. 13.

Based on a housing study done in 2008, the village's comprehensive plan and eight goals outlined in both, Elmshaeuser suggested the village start somewhat small.

"Find an investor or developer to build a market-rate duplex but target it to elderly people," he said.

He explained that a duplex designed for older residents will actually provide four rather than two housing units.

If there are two older people in town willing to sell their homes and move into a maintenance-free duplex at a reasonable cost, two younger families could move in or move up into the single-family homes.

"Those houses could be purchased by younger families or a developer to be used as rentals," Elmshaeuser said.

But the cost of the homes and the rent charged have to be considered carefully.

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“The gap between what families can afford and what’s available here is huge,” he said. “You can have all the grandiose plans in the world but if they don’t fit your community, they don’t do you any good.”

Trustees asked about rent-to-own programs such as CROWN (Credit to Own) housing that was built recently in Dawson County.

Elmshaeuser said because the housing market is unstable now and incentives aren’t as good as they were a few years ago, developers are hesitant to get into such 15-year rent-to-own programs.

Elmshaeuser also told trustees to continue working with the Lincoln County Community Development Corporation on the owner-occupied rehabilitation projects. He suggested they consider nuisance abatement as well as

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