

VISALIA TIMES-DELTA

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City OKs \$100,000 loan for Self-Help

Luis Hernandez
Visalia Times-Delta
USA TODAY NETWORK

Visalia City Council approved a \$100,000 loan request from Self-Help Enterprises to help pay for a refurbishment project for a six-unit apartment complex in north Visalia.

The project will bring improvements to not just the apartment complex, but the whole neighborhood, said Visalia Councilman Greg Collins.

"It will be nice to get apartment complex improved," he said. "The lead paint issue will be taken care of."

The complex is in the 500 block of North Encina Street, between Murray and Race avenues, part of Visalia's Historic District. Collins said the improvement project, coupled with Self-Help Enterprises' management, will prove a winning combination.

"It will ensure the vitality of the historic neighborhood," he said.

The apartment complex will be used as affordable housing or transitional home, said Rhonda Haynes, Visalia's housing specialist. It could eventually help people get off the streets.

"[This] assists in the efforts of addressing homelessness and those at-risk of homelessness by providing additional affordable rental housing in Visalia," she said.

Haynes said federal funding will be used for the loan. In exchange, Visalia gets rent-controlled housing for 55 years.

Self-Help Enterprises will get the city's approved money after buying the property. Last week, a For Sale sign was still posted on the complex's front lawn. Haynes said Self-Help Enterprises will use \$200,000 for the project.

Visalia Councilman Steve Nelsen said this is the second home rehab project the city and Self-Help Enterprises have partnered up on. Previously, Self-Help Enterprises fronted a project close to Lincoln Oval Park.

"It's a true partnership," he said. "This is an example of public and pri-

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Visalia council approved a loan to Self-Help Enterprises to improve a six-unit apartment complex in north Visalia. LUIS HERNANDEZ

Project

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vate entities combining for the betterment of the city."

Nelsen said a home improvement project can be what starts the flourishing of a neighborhood.

"It takes one person to step up and redo landscaping," he said. "It can become infectious and it can add to the improvement of the whole neighborhood."

Collins said Visalia needs partners such as Self-Help Enterprises because they specialize in what the city needs.

"It's a partnership," he said. "They have the expertise in bringing up neighborhoods. The city is not in that business."

Nelsen said Self-Help Enterprises is a good partner for home improvement projects.

"I can't applaud them enough for what they do," he said.