

# PATTERSON IRRIGATOR

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## Slight changes move affordable apartments closer to construction

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By: Staff

The Planning Commission on Thursday agreed to some minor changes to the Stonegate Village affordable housing apartment complex in the Villages of Patterson area, west of Walnut Grove School and north of Walnut Avenue.

The project, which is included in the Villages Master Plan, will include 138 units, made up of 23 two-story buildings with one, two and three bedrooms. The complex will also feature a community center, picnic area, basketball court, computer lab and laundry facilities.

All units will be available to low- or very low-income households.

Program Director of Real Estate Development for Self-help Enterprises Betsy McGovern-Garcia said that the nonprofit has been around for over 50 years, and owns and operates 32 affordable rental communities, with a total of approximately 1,400 units. Like the current project, all are what she described as “service-enriched,” with computer labs, onsite services, after school programs, computer and ESL classes, and home ownership preparation, among other amenities. The group works to bring services on-site, she said.

Free transit passes will be available for all residents for two years once the community opens, she said, and the nonprofit is working with both the city and the county to offer things like bike lanes and bike racks, and to ensure easy access to buses from the community. A bus turnout on Walnut Avenue will serve the area, McGovern-Garcia said. Although only 230 parking spaces are required, the project has 253.

City officials agreed to accept a six-foot wood fence with steel posts for part of the project, in the event an eight-foot masonry fence is cost-prohibitive. Two other fences will also be installed; one of which will be a four-foot high, wrought iron fence with a swing gate, to encourage interaction between residents of the complex and other housing expected to be built nearby, McGovern-Garcia said. By way of example, she mentioned kids in the neighborhood being welcome to come and play with kids from the complex on the project’s basketball court.

Funding for the project does include fence maintenance, McGovern-Garcia said, citing a recently-updated project wherein fences were replaced. Questioned by Planning Commissioner David Applegate as to how long Self-Help would provide maintenance, she responded, “Fifty-five years.”

Of the project, Commission Chair Ron West said, “apartments are a challenge, and I think you’re trying to do something here to make it work.” The item passed with a unanimous vote.

The project is the second apartment project in the area; the first will be market-rate, while this one is affordable.