

City Council approves development deal for new westside apartment complex

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9

New development will include 29 affordable workforce housing units



A new apartment development is coming to the westside after Spartanburg City Council voted unanimously on Monday to approve a development agreement with Greystone Property Development III Corp. Located on Franklin Avenue, the parcel became the first property annexed into the city on the western side of Interstate 26 in 2019.

As part of the development agreement, 10 percent of the development's 288 units will be set aside for "workforce housing," meaning the apartments will be leased to tenants whose incomes are at or below 80 percent of Spartanburg's median household income. A one-bedroom unit would lease for a maximum of \$971 per month, with two and three bedroom leasing for \$1,165 and \$1,346 per month respectively. The agreement also includes a tax abatement allowing the developer to pay the city an annual fee in lieu of tax payment of \$125,177 in the first year and scaling up until year 20. Greystone is required to invest more than \$40 million in the project in order to satisfy the agreement.

Also at Monday's meeting, City Council voted to table a proposed change to the City's local historic preservation rules and the nomination of the former Mary H. Wright Elementary School building to City's local historic register.

The proposed rule change would've altered City Code to read that when proposed modifications to a locally designated historic property have been approved by the State Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO), those same modifications would only need to be approved by the City at the staff level without a separate review by the City's Historic Architecture Review Board (HARB). City Manager Chris Story explained in a memo to City Council that the change is meant to accommodate developments that must seek approval from SHPO, which uses the same governing standards used by HARB. According to the memo, the proposed rule change was meant to avoid the complication of potentially having a development approved by SHPO but not approved by HARB and would ultimately strengthen local historic preservation efforts, saying that the current rules create "a point or risk and uncertainty that could dissuade others from taking on such projects."

Several City Council members cited concerns that the proposed rule change seemed too closely tied to the planned redevelopment of the former Mary H. Wright Elementary School and ultimately voted 6-1 to

postpone the matter until HARB can weigh-in on the proposed change before Council's next meeting. Council member Rob Rain voted against. Council then voted to postpone the vote to add the former Mary H. Wright Elementary School to the local historic register until the proposed rule change is evaluated by HARB. Council members Erica Brown, Jerome Rice, and Meghan Smith voted against.