

# Shenandoah Area Agency On Aging Receives \$10,000 Grant For Upcoming Project

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The Shenandoah Area Agency on Aging (SAAA) has been planning renovations of the old Woodstock school and building of senior housing for several months. After being welcomed into the community, on Monday, Dec. 14, the town of Woodstock received a grant for \$10,000 on behalf of the agency for the project. The SAAA began working on the project last year when the supervisors approached the group about the Old Woodstock school building. The organization, which assists the elderly in six counties, currently holds its offices in Front Royal.

"After the board asked if we would be interested in finding a use for the school, we went and looked at it, seeing that it needed some work," SAAA president and CEO Helen Cockrell said. "We began talking to the housing authority, found that there is a strong need for senior housing and it became our new project."

At its Sept. 8 meeting, the Board of Supervisors voted to dispose the building and property surrounding it and give it to the agency.

The first part of the project will be to renovate the old school and move offices from Front Royal to Woodstock. The organization plans to keep the historic setting of the building with an architectural historian on the project's team. Certain guidelines will be met to keep the character of the school.

Once renovations are complete, construction of 22 one-bedroom senior cottages will begin to the left of the building and directly across the street. The homes will be handicap accessible.

On Monday, Dec. 14, the town of Woodstock received a \$10,000 Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) Grant on behalf of the SAAA. The town was the applicant and the agency will receive the funds.

According to Jonathan Price, Director of Housing Development, deliverables from the grant will be a 3D Architectural model of the school and cottages, a site survey, and an architectural historian.

"The deliverables from this grant will assist in the future design of the property and help the agency complete our due diligence on the old school property," said Price. "They will also help in future approval processes with the local government, Department of Historic Resources, and funding eligibility."

This initial grant will get the ball rolling on the project and the agency can look forward. The SAAA is looking now to acquire a community facilities loan through Rural Development to fund the renovation of the school.

The senior housing will be funding through a Housing and Urban Development Supportive Housing for the Elderly grant. The agency recently submitted the application for that grant on Dec. 14.

"The next step is to move forward with the design process of the project and seek final approval for the construction and renovation and secure all other financing," Price said.

Funding is hoped to be secured by March to begin construction on the old school building. If plans come together, the agency hopes to move into its new offices in Woodstock at the beginning of 2011 and have all cottages built within five years.