

Galveston board OKs public housing project

\$88 million effort would rebuild 536 units

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GALVESTON — Despite vocal opposition to public housing, the Galveston Housing Authority voted Monday to adopt an outline for an \$88 million project to rebuild all 536 public housing units destroyed by Hurricane Ike.

“Bring back the residents of Galveston as soon as we can,” City Councilman Tarris Woods, a nonvoting board member, urged commissioners before they voted unanimously to adopt a plan by board member Raymond Lewis.

The commission scraped a plan proposed by Housing Authority staff that would have scattered more low-income housing throughout the community and revitalized more of the thousands of vacant properties in the blighted heart of the city.

The most strident organization opposing public housing, the Galveston Open Government Project, offered no public comment at the meeting.

The vote disappointed a community group that supported the staff plan. Ralph McMorris, who headed the Galveston Alliance of Island Neighborhoods housing committee, said that by increasing the density the commission “ignored the quality of life of the residents.”

David Miller, President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Galveston Chapter, said he supported the higher density plan because he feared that the property needed for lower density would be too expensive and therefore delay the return of public housing residents.

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