

Housing Authority Lays Plans For Renovating Apartments

Plans for a major renovation program to try to spruce up the exteriors of some older public housing have been begun by the Columbia Housing Authority.

The authority's board of directors decided Thursday to have its buildings and grounds committee meet with architects to search for creative ways to change the facades of buildings at Gonzales Gardens, Allen-Benedict Court, Hendley Homes, Jaggers Terrace and Saxon Homes.

The board also re-elected David Ellison, chairman, and Betty Brandon, vice chairwoman, both for third one-year terms.

William Ballou, the agency's administrator, said the exterior renovation program still is two to three years

away. But the housing authority will begin seeking designs that will give the brick buildings new and separate identities, he said.

Ballou expects the cost of both exterior and interior renovations could be \$12,000 to \$13,000 a unit. About 1,400 units would be involved in the program.

The work would be spread over about 15 years, he said. Funding for the program would come from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Ballou said he expected to receive about \$2.1 million from HUD this fall for other modernization programs, aimed primarily at energy conservation. Among those projects will be the installation of new heating systems.

Also, the authority plans to install new exterior lighting systems that will be attractive and help maintain security. The housing authority also plans to replace leaking underground gas pipes at Saxon Homes, Hendley Homes, Gonzales Gardens and Jaggers Terrace.

Currently apartments at Latimer Manor are being painted, and plans to improve the bathrooms at Gonzales Gardens and Allen-Benedict Court are on the boards.

Ballou said the bathrooms have antiquated water systems and no showers. At Gonzales Gardens, the bathrooms have not been renovated since the project was built 38 years ago, he said.