

## Board approves row houses and soccer field turf

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As the current school year draws to a close, two new projects have been approved for Benedictine College. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors approved plans Monday for the building of town houses as a new student housing as well as plans for artificial turf at the Raven Soccer Complex.

The town houses (or row houses) will be constructed at the northwest corner of 2nd and L streets and will be available for students beginning in the fall of 2010. Currently there are two campus houses at this location. However, no one is being assigned to live in these houses next year because of the poor condition of the properties. These houses will be torn down, likely over this summer, to make room for the new row houses.

“Those houses are falling apart,” President Stephen D. Minnis said. “The key for us is that we wanted to take care of that corner which is becoming blighted and we wanted to bring students closer to campus. We were going to lose nine students on campus because we’re closing those two houses.”

Minnis said a condition of the project was that it would not cost the school money. They have been talking with developers who would construct the property and then lease it back to the college. Currently, no agreement has been finalized, but the college has been in discussions with Treanor Architects, who have designed every building on campus since 2000 including St. Scolastica Hall, Legacy Hall, the Marian Grotto, the upcoming academic building as well as renovations in Ferrell Hall and the Raven Roost.

Although plans are still tentative, current plans call for a series of six row houses with parking in the back. Each would contain three stories and house four students each with their own private bedroom. The main floor would contain a kitchen and lounge area. The upstairs and downstairs floors would be nearly identical with two bedrooms and a bathroom.

Minnis said the row houses are likely to cost slightly more than Legacy Hall, currently the most expensive dorms on campus. However, he added that they probably would not cost much more and the college wants to keep them as affordable as possible. The houses will also contain extra amenities such as free laundry facilities and larger lounge areas than those in Legacy Hall.

Vice President of Student Life Linda Henry said that she is excited by the plans to for the row houses but that many things, such as cost and who is eligible to live there, still must be decided.

“We haven’t worked out all the details,” Henry said. “We’ve talked about some of the pros and cons with RD’s and some students. Its an exciting new venture because we’re cleaning up that area, and we’re providing another option for students.”

The other project approved on Monday was to install artificial turf at the Raven Soccer Complex. This will be done over the summer in time for the start of the fall soccer season.

The soccer teams struggled this past season with the condition of the field and the decision to install turf should lead to less cancelled practices and games. The turf will be paid for entirely through fundraising from donors who are interested in giving to specifically to athletic causes.

Minnis said the turf will not only benefit the soccer teams, but all students at Benedictine College. Because there will no longer be a concern of damage to grass, students will be able to use the field for recreational purposes. The field could also be utilized for intramurals and club sports.

“It will really get used a lot,” Minnis said. “Soccer will be using it for games and practice but during off times I really anticipate those lights will be on from three to midnight almost every night.”