

# Village looks into Affordable Housing

BY MICHELLE DUREGGER—Staff Writer | Posted: Sunday, February 1, 2015 12:00 am

ANGEL FIRE— Local solar sales and installation company, GoSolarGo, has shined a light on the need for affordable housing in Angel Fire and the surrounding area. They have proposed a solution: a highly efficient, solar powered 13-14 unit apartment complex.

This has stirred talks in Village Council regarding a Affordable Housing Plan once again, this time with the input of New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, the state’s designated housing agency. MFA is responsible for the administration of all state and federal housing projects. They also help communities navigate the process including offering programs to match funds for hiring a consultant to develop a housing plan tailored to the community, as well as fund matching for the actual housing project.

Village councilors along with GoSolarGo are in the process of finding the best solution to the housing need, that may also include reaching out to surrounding communities to make the project a regional housing program.

While funding and land donations are still in the infancy of planning, the Herfels have proposed building the housing out of highly energy and cost efficient, American-made materials through Titan Atlas and 1SolTech. The building would be made of a concrete block and styrofoam system that is used all over the world to build highly efficient houses with a energy efficiency rating of R-48.

The housing will look as nice or as stripped down as the village wants, due to a concrete stamping process to texturize the outside of the blocks, complete with a copper roof and copper colored solar panels as per city request.

In the end, GoSolarGo proposes a highly efficient, renewable energy powered, affordable housing. “People that can’t afford rent anyway don’t have any business paying high electric bills—so we want to do net metering for each of the units. The electric bill would be zero,” said Louise Herfel.

“Affordable Housing has been in discussion for years,” said Angel Fire Councilor Christy Gernscheid. Don Borgeson, owner of Angel Fire Real Estate Market Research, has been involved in



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data collection and discussions since 1996 and expressed the dire need for housing in a informational meeting Monday (Jan. 26).

While discussing the city of Taos's need with Gernscheid, Louise Herfel was hashing out details of a potential project involving solar panels on top of affordable housing apartments. "Christy said to me, 'Why Taos? We need it too, would you work with us now?'" said Louise. "So we have been talking to the Resort and the Village about how we could make this happen."

"For us at GoSolarGo, it is about what we can do for the community; we just happen to have a superior product to offer," said Louise Herfel. Funding and timelines are in the planning stage, though GoSolarGo hopes to commence building as soon as possible. Public meetings will be held to continue the planning and implementation of the project.