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Community land trust for affordable housing in central Fox Valley?



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Batavia aldermen may be interested in studying whether to create a community land trust, with several other towns, to increase affordable housing in the Tri-Cities and North Aurora.

Aldermen agreed Tuesday, however, that they don't want to discuss spending money on a study until after they learn more about the concept.

They can do so at a March 14 presentation to the St. Charles city council.

The first community land trust in Illinois started in 2003 in Highland Park. The Community Partners for Affordable Housing buys and rehabilitates houses. It retains ownership of the land underneath the buildings, while selling the buildings to low- and moderate-income people. There are other ways trusts can operate to meet the housing goals.

Batavia, Geneva, St. Charles and North Aurora were grouped together in 2013 for a study of affordable housing by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency on Planning.

CMAP has been writing "Homes For A Changing Region" studies throughout the suburbs.

Under state-set standards, Geneva does not have enough affordable housing -- at least 10 percent -- and had to come up with a plan to address that. The rest had enough, but in Batavia, the percentage is decreasing, said Scott Buening, Batavia's community development director.

The report indicates an affordable owner-occupied house should cost no more than \$168,000 for people making a certain percentage of the town's median household income, according to CMAP's findings. Batavia's median household income was \$88,529 as of 2011, according to the report.

To determine whether a community land trust is feasible, how it would operate, and an ad hoc panel of local officials propose hiring Business and Professional People for the Public Interest, for \$12,000, to determine whether a land trust is feasible, how it could operate, and what its goals would be.