

## Angleton care center gets tax break

By MICHAEL FREEMAN | Posted: Thursday, December 15, 2011 2:00 am

**ANGLETON** — Sara Richards is excited about the upcoming expansion of Country Village Care. So are city leaders.

City Council this week approved a 10-year tax abatement agreement on the estimated \$10 million expansion to the retirement center at 721 W. Mulberry. Richards, the administrator of the senior living facility, said construction on the project should start during the last week of February or the first week of March.

“This complex is going to be like no other,” Richards said.

Richards said the Country Village Care expansion will include independent living and assisted-living buildings, a memory care facility, a nursing care facility and a 3,000-square-foot rehabilitation gymnasium. It will also feature a town center that will facilitate a café, chapel, health spa, gift shop and movie theater, Richards said.

“We’re happy for them because it looks like a nice project,” said Patti Worfe, interim city manager. “It absolutely enhances the quality of life here. We’re excited.”

The approved abatement will waive all city taxes on the facility’s new buildings and improvements for the first two years, Worfe said. Over the following eight years, the parent company, Grether Health Care Facilities, will pay an increasing percentage of its city taxes for its Country Village Care property until 2023, Worfe said. During the third and fourth years, 75 percent of the city taxes would be waived, 50 percent during the fifth and sixth years, and 25 percent during years seven through 10.

Worfe did not have a figure for the estimated cost to the city in potential tax revenue over the life of the abatement, saying it would be “tough to predict” because of possible changes in construction or taxable value.

The company still will pay city taxes on its existing structures during the 10-year period, Worfe said.

Richards said the expansion construction, headed by Ebco General Contractors of Cameron, should last nine months, followed by renovation of the existing buildings, which should take three to four months.

“A facility like this has a lot of potential,” Worfe said.

Worfe said the new facility should bring at least 10 new jobs to the area. Richards said the expansion will also allow an additional 52 to 54 residents to move in. The facility already houses more than 130 residents.

“We’re so proud to do this in Angleton,” Richards said.

Richards said Grether Health Care Facilities has served the residents of Angleton for 27 years with its Country Village Care and Country Village Assisted Living facilities.

Also Tuesday, council approved removing a phrase in the alarms system ordinance that was last amended in August. Angleton Assistant Chief of Police Katherine Davis said verbiage that was included in August’s amendments caused confusion among people because it implied they could be exempt from ever paying an alarms system permit fee again if they report two or fewer false alarms in the first year.

“We can nitpick these things to death,” Mayor Randy Rhyne said.

Davis and City Attorney Mary Kay Fischer insisted the verbiage be removed, which council did. The ordinance still requires people to pay a permit fee of \$25 per year to have an active alarm system.

Council also authorized Rhyne to sign a letter in support of a regional water facility planning study and handed out employee appreciation certificates.