

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS COULD BE IN BELOIT'S FUTURE

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BELOIT - Beloit's latest residential project in the Gateway business district could see construction this year, as the Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation (GBEDC) weighs multiple avenues for future growth for the city in 2019.

The GBEDC's business committee heard an update Tuesday on Forward Construction Group's \$18 million plan for residential units on a 15-acre site southwest of the Gateway Boulevard and Eagles Ridge Drive intersection. Forward Construction has been responsible for various projects in the area, including duplexes on Elmwood Avenue and a range of commercial businesses in the area.

GBEDC Executive Director Andrew Janke said the city was "comfortable" entering into a 90-day hold agreement over the land as developer Scott Ward looks to determine final cost estimates, with an expected construction start in the spring or early summer. Janke told committee members that Ward was at the stage to have more detailed designs drafted for the project that currently shows between 96 and 120 units.

"We were encouraged by what he's put together here," Janke said. "He obviously has a long way to go on this."

The committee also heard an update on the Angel Museum property on Pleasant Street.

After the museum closed last year, the city is preparing to sell the 5 acre property along the riverfront. Janke said there were three parties "with serious interest" in the property.

A request for proposals is expected to be sent out by the end of this month, Janke noted.

One of the interested parties, Visit Beloit, could move into the site after an expansion of around 7,000 square-feet of modern office space to the existing building. Proposals will be sent back to the city for review later this year. Visit Beloit, GBEDC and Downtown Beloit Association were relocated to a temporary space at the Eclipse Center following changes to the Hotel Goodwin project. The DBA has since relocated to the Strong building on Grand Avenue.

"There are some cool concepts being put out there," Janke said. "We are very confident we will find a buyer and a use for the property quickly."

Other possible uses for the site Janke said have been a microbrewery, adding residential units and office space, Janke added. Future re-zoning as a planned urban development.

Also at the Tuesday meeting, there was a discussion of a possible new home for the Beloit Snappers. The 5-acre property south of Beloit City Hall and adjacent to the U.S. Post Office could be the site of the baseball team's new stadium, but Janke said the development push was "not a done deal," with 30 to 60 days before it's known whether or not the project materializes, he added.

If the push to relocate the baseball falls through, Janke said a request for proposals could be issued to area developers this summer for evaluation late in 2019.

"We think now is the right time," Janke said.