

Mill on Flax progressing

Project includes apartments, commercial building

By Dillon Davis

cdavis@aimmediamidwest.com

Plans for a mixed-use development on Flax Street are moving forward after the Delaware Planning Commission approved a rezoning amendment, conditional use permit, and preliminary development plan for the project during Wednesday's meeting.

RiverWest, a Columbusbased investment and development firm, announced its intentions to help revitalize Delaware's east side in March with The Mill on Flax project being proposed at 15 Flax St. As part of the proposal, 174 apartment units and one commercial building would be constructed in two subareas on the approximate 5.14-acre site. The site is located on the east side of the Olentangy River, north of East Central Avenue, and is centered around the western terminus of Flax Street.

See MILL | 2



This aerial rendering shows the proposed layout of The Mill on Flax project on the east side of Delaware. Pictured to the east is Central Avenue, while the Olentangy River is shown surrounding the property to the west and south.

Courtesy | City of Delaware

Mill

From page 1

Subarea A would include the 174 apartment units spread between six buildings, with amenities such as a swimming pool and walking paths included, while Subarea B would contain the approximately 4,746-square-foot commercial building. A use for the commercial building has not yet been determined, although possibilities of a restaurant, retail, or office space are all being considered.

RiverWest met with residents on Feb. 2 to garner feedback on what the community would like to see at the location. A second meeting was conducted on March 1 to share the project proposal, which was "wellreceived" at that time according to RiverWest Principal Brian Suiter.

The site has an extensive history dating back to the 1850s when it was annexed into the city of Delaware.

to the city's Real Estate Market Analysis and Downtown Delaware Vision Plan studies that were conducted in 2021.

"The Real Estate Market Analysis touched on current market conditions for office, retail, and residential real estate," Hughes said. "Essentially, our vacant inventory of each was either nonexistent, aging, or waning. The Downtown Delaware Vision Plan explored projects in the downtown and Riverfront District that could assist in alleviating these tight market conditions. One of these was the redevelopment of the Olentangy riverfront to turn it into an asset that would attract quality, diverse housing in the Riverfront District, as well as supportive retail and offices. The Mill on Flax project provides a couple of elements or solutions to these studies."

"This represents an opportunity to start to do what we outlined in (the) Delaware Together (Comprehensive Plan), to start to rebuild and reestablish social connections through physical form in this location," Efland said during the meeting. "It's a very, very

In 1863, the Delaware Manufacturing Company constructed the Flax Mill and Warehouse north of Flax Street and west of Milo Alley. The Delaware Chair Company moved to the site in 1876 and was a major employer for the surrounding neighborhood.

The developers are seeking to rehabilitate and reuse a portion of the historic building as a way of establishing an identity for the development.

By redeveloping the original Delaware Manufacturing Company building, RiverWest said it hopes to “embrace the neighborhood’s rich history in manufacturing.” The building will serve as the “centerpiece and heart of the development,” according to the firm.

The apartment buildings would be comprised of 24 studio units, 108 one-bedroom units, and 36 two-bedroom units. The mix of units is expected to help the city in addressing attainable and workforce housing goals that have been outlined as part of the city’s Delaware Together Comprehensive Plan.

In a memorandum to Planning and Community Development Director Dave Efland, Economic Development Director Sean Hughes supported the project by referring

difficult thing to do, but I think it represents somewhat the start of the possibility here.”

Efland said of the project, which would bring forward a significant change to the current area, “It does represent a type of housing that our market studies indicate that we need ... I would say that change is difficult. It’s different, but it is necessary. And it happens whether you do it actively or passively by simply allowing it to happen. Not making a choice is making a choice as the old saying goes.”

The three requests will go before City Council for final approval at its next meeting on Monday, June 6. Further details of the project as part of the final development plan will still need to be submitted to the Planning Commission and council.

Reach Dillon Davis at 740-413-0904. Follow him on Twitter @DillonDavis56.