

Six-story buildings proposed for core of downtown Muskegon



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on October 22, 2016 at 8:01 AM, updated October 22, 2016 at 8:09 AM

MUSKEGON, MI – Three six-story mixed-use buildings are planned for a lot on Western Avenue in the heart of downtown Muskegon.

A local developer has a purchase agreement for the lot at the southwest corner of Western and Second Street that currently is the site of the city of Muskegon's sand volleyball courts, said Dave Alexander, executive director of Downtown Muskegon Now.

The developer plans to purchase and build on the lot in three phases, Alexander said. He declined to name the developer.

Plans are for three buildings that conform with the city's form-based code and would have retail or restaurant space on the first floor, office space above that and residential units on the top floors, Alexander said. Construction on the first building could begin next summer with completion by late summer/early fall of 2018, he said.

The lot next door to the Sidock Building is owned by the Downtown Muskegon Development Corp., which took control of 23 acres of former Muskegon Mall property in the early 2000s. The corporation is comprised of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County, the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce and the Paul C. Johnson Foundation.

Alexander, who provides staff services to the DMDC, declined to say how much the purchase agreement is for. The asking prices is \$217,000, according to a for-sale sign on the property.

The developer received approval from the DMDC to split the half-acre lot into three parcels, Alexander said. The purchase agreement is on the first parcel closest to the Sidock Building, and the developer has purchase options for the two other parcels, Alexander said.

The plan is to then develop a second six-story building next to the first one and finally a third six-story building at the corner, he said. The three structure could be connected internally, he said.

Phasing the project will help the developer finance it, he said.

The developer is currently conducting "due diligence" on the development proposal, and the purchase for the first parcel is expected to be finalized within "months," he said.

"The DMDC wants this to happen sooner rather than later," Alexander said. "We're not going to let this drag on."

The city had brought truckloads of sand to the lot in early summer, creating two downtown recreational volleyball courts. The courts will be relocated, possibly to another DMDC-owned lot on the northeast corner of Western and Second, officials said.

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