

NewPorte Landing ready to 'come to life'

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La PORTE — South Bend-based developer Holladay Properties will begin construction in the spring on two retail buildings in NewPorte Landing.

Sit-down restaurants, retail shops and an eye clinic are among merchants the company hopes to draw to the development.

In a report to the city Redevelopment Commission on Wednesday, company representatives said a 10,000-square-foot building and a 5,000-square-foot building along Truesdell Avenue would be the first of several planned for the 17-acre parcel, which was purchased by Holladay from the commission in October.

Holladay will lease the land and buildings to commercial tenants.

Michael Micka, vice president of development, said the company would present drawings to the commission next month showing the layout of the development.

“Then we can start meeting with potential tenants to really start generating some interest,” Micka said.

While it was still too early to say which retailers would be involved, Micka said the project would include a mix of smaller shops and restaurants rather than any big-box stores. He also said the layout would feature outdoor seating and a small-community atmosphere with "walkability."

In addition to any restaurants, the development might include a bookstore, a hairstylist, a phone store, an ice cream shop or a dental office, according to Micka.

On the opposite end of NewPorte Landing, meanwhile, work on the 50,000-square-foot Dunes Event Center began two weeks ago with the foundation being poured and steel delivered to the site.

Construction on that project is scheduled for completion by spring.

The Dunes Event Center, an outgrowth of the Dunes Volleyball Club in Rolling Prairie, will be designed to draw teams and spectators to La Porte for tournaments. Eventually, the complex will include batting cages, basketball courts, soccer fields and event space.

Starbucks, facing Pine Lake Avenue, is scheduled to open next week, according to Bert Cook, executive director of the Greater La Porte Economic Development Corp.

The first store in NewPorte Landing, a Dunkin Donuts, opened in 2015.

Holladay, in purchasing the 17-acre property from the Redevelopment Commission, agreed to begin construction on the first two buildings in the spring to encourage momentum.

“This agreement with Holladay ensures NewPorte Landing will come to life in the next year and a half,” Cook said.

Planners also hope to attract housing to the project.

NewPorte Landing is a former brownfield site where Allis-Chalmers workers once churned out agricultural equipment and military vehicles before the factories closed their doors in the 1980s.

Holladay Properties has been involved in NewPorte Landing since 2013, working with GLEDC and the Redevelopment Commission to make the 50-acre site ready for fresh development.

Micka said the aim was to bring new businesses to the community rather than draw customers away from the downtown historic district.

“It’s a little bit of a balancing act,” he said.

A second phase of NewPorte Landing, one that incorporates the properties west of Clear Lake, is already under way.