
Flagler 'spec' building project moves forward

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Officials say it will enhance business opportunities

BUNNELL — In June, Flagler County commissioners approved a \$90,000 subsidy to an unnamed developer to build a so-called “spec” building.

On Wednesday, speculation about that developer ended with news that Beutlich Development LLC has finalized the purchase of a parcel at the southwest corner of U.S. 1 and Otis Stone Hunter Road in Bunnell with plans to construct a 20,000-square-foot building, according to a county media release.

The partners in Beutlich Development, Erlene Thomas and Jack Beutlich, also own Beutlich Pharmaceuticals, an Illinois company that relocated to Flagler County in 2014.

The pair said leasing of the property will be handled by Margaret Sheehan-Jones at ParkSide Realty in Palm Coast.

“We’re excited to be investing in Flagler County,” Thomas and Beutlich said in the county release. “We’ve worked closely with the county’s Department of Economic Opportunity team and local professionals to ensure that once the U.S. Highway 1 Commercial Park is constructed, the project will be something that we can all be proud of.”

Acknowledging the dearth of available industrial and commercial space in the county, the spec building project is something members of the county’s economic development team have been working on for several years.

“This is extremely important,” Helga van Eckert, executive director of the Flagler County Department of Economic Opportunity, said Wednesday.

Van Eckert said it is no coincidence the developers selected a site on U.S. 1.. Last year, the county commissioned a study of the U.S. 1 corridor to determine what opportunities for commercial and industrial development were available on the highway and how to market those to potential developers.

“We have been marketing the corridor as a result of the study,” Van Eckert said. “It has great name recognition and it is one of our primary corridors.”

Flagler County Commissioner Donald O’Brien, who also serves as chairman of the county’s Economic Opportunity Advisory Council, said the spec building could be a catalyst for future economic development.

“If we can get some good companies in there that are in our targeted industries, I think that is going to be real important,” he said. “We have a partner here, folks who are willing to invest and create some space that we don’t have.”

O’Brien said the project is likely to generate more speculative building.

“If someone can show the way, show that this works, I think for sure there is capital out there,” he said. “This kind of project is going on all the time in our surrounding area.”

Van Eckert also sees the project as a catalyst for future industrial and commercial development on the U.S. 1 corridor.

“We would fully expect that once this is completed and occupied we would see more development occurring,” she said.

Construction will begin later this year and it is expected to be available for lease in early 2018, according to the county media release.