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<<
[Back](#)

Uniformity planned for urban renewal

By Pete Skiba

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What started as one set of partners planning a 73-room hotel could expand to a multitude of businesses revitalizing half a block of downtown Cape Coral.

At its regular meeting Tuesday night, the Cape Coral Redevelopment Agency Board heard Suzanne Kuehn, its executive director, explain the seed of a deal for the block between Cape Coral Parkway and Lafayette Street west to Vincennes Street.

Trying to drum up support for a hotel planned by partners Kevin Keough and Stan Sikora, Kuehn said she found landowners on the west end of the block willing to sell.

"All the property owners met with me last Thursday," Kuehn said. "The property owners might want to sell so we could consolidate to the corner."

If the deals go through with the many owners involved, including the Zak Building condominium association, it could mean offices and storefronts along Lafayette with a three-story parking garage behind them. And there possibly could be business or residential condominiums above the parking garage.

"It could be done in phases so everyone has the parking they need," said real estate agent Rubin Zak.

The idea started when Keough asked the redevelopment agency for help in buying an about 2,000-square-foot piece of land behind Martinis Bar and the Sushiyakiw Restaurant building.

As owners of that building, the partners planned to replace it with a hotel



IN OTHER BUSINESS

In other business Tuesday, members of the Cape Coral Community Redevelopment Agency:

- Heard a report from board member Carolyn Conant on trash compactors that could be used in areas of the redevelopment that are plagued by trash and scattered commercial trash bins. Currently it costs an average \$3,394 a month for trash removal in Big John's shopping center, Conant said. Even then the parking lot is a mess with haphazardly placed trash containers, she said. Despite the high price, as high as \$15,000, to switch over to hidden compactors, it would be worth it to have a more attractive and walkable downtown, Conant said.
- Postponed deciding on a contract with Frank DeMarchi to act as marketing consultant for \$1,000 a month.

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that could also hold the bar and restaurant. The hotel would need a parking garage.

To get help buying the last remaining strip for the parking garage, the partners offered to trade free public parking in the building to the redevelopment agency for buying the lot.

"Now what started out as a really nice project could be a magnificent one," Keough said.

The redevelopment board authorized Kuehn to hire an architect to come up with a concept for the block from the Zak building at 1314 Cape Coral Parkway west to Vincennes.

The board planned to consider buying the property fronting on Lafayette Street to trade for public parking in the planned hotel garage at a meeting on March 21.

<<
[Back](#)