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Another developer looks to buy hospital

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Another prospective buyer is eyeing the soon-to-be vacant Sid Peterson Memorial Hospital building.

The board has signed a letter of intent with Wender & Hall, LLC of San Antonio. A purchase price has been agreed upon, but a mutually acceptable purchase contract must be executed within 45 days, said board president Tom Murray.

“There’s nothing that’s a done deal until the contract is signed and the properties are closed on,” noted Robin Amerine, a hospital spokeswoman.

Murray said he was “very confident” the partnership with Wender & Hall would be a success for the hospital and the city because of the company’s experience in other ventures.

“Marty Wender has quite a reputation as a developer in San Antonio ... what we as a board are comfortable with is their understanding of the city of Kerrville and their understanding of what we’re looking for to enhance the downtown ... were confident they’re going to do the right things for Kerrville.”

Marty Wender, CEO of Wender & Hall, was appointed by former Gov. Mark White to the Texas Economic Development Commission in 1985. In 1983, Wender’s company brokered the land sale for Sea World of Texas, plus helped build the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort and the Arthur Hill Championship Golf Course.

“We love downtown projects,” Wender said. “We believe downtown Kerrville has tremendous opportunity, just like the Hemisphere changed the whole community of San Antonio. We think we have the opportunity to do that. We really, for years, have believed in Kerrville.”

Murray said the developer would have 120 days to perform a market analysis.

Wender said his company plans to assemble a team of experts to determine “what is needed in the community ... we believe that the location where the hospital is, is the center of what’s going to happen in Kerrville.”

But before the study takes place, “we have to get the property under contract first,” Wender said.

According to Murray, Wender & Hall’s initial vision for the hospital buildings is

“retail on the ground floor, offices and some type of residential.”

Wender said he doesn't foresee the hospital buildings being demolished. “We saw the view from the top of the building and it's a beautiful view,” he said. “I don't think that's in our thinking.”

Guy Overby, president of the Kerr Economic Development Foundation, said his group looks forward to working with Wender & Hall as partners to redevelop the downtown.

“There is a really exciting spirit right now,” Overby said about the hospital's announcement.

The hospital board and the developer expect to finalize a purchase agreement by December and close on the contract soon after the hospital is vacated in mid-to-late April of 2008. Construction of the new Peterson Regional Medical Center is nearly 80 percent complete.

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