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New Life for Mason Square Fire Station



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By Mike Skurko

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The old Mason Square Fire Station in Springfield may soon have a new tenant. On Tuesday, the city announced American International College as the preferred developer for a redevelopment project at Mason Square.

Plans for the fire station include an indoor/outdoor cyber cafe, a local artist gallery, and a new communications department and broadcast studio for AIC.

"I think the opportunity for people in the community to come in, get a cup of coffee, sit down, and get on the internet is huge." said Vincent Maniaci, President of AIC. "I think it's something that goes a long way in terms of building the community."

Both school and city officials hope that AIC's development will promote a positive growth for the entire neighborhood. Springfield Mayor Domenic

Weather



52.0 °F
Current Temp

Overcast

Wind : North at 10.4 MPH (9 KT)
Humidity : 94 %
Pressure : 1009.9 mb



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43
Low 43
High 43
Humidity 48%
Wind CALM

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Sarno said he has seen how education can help revitalize surrounding areas, citing the Trinity College area in Hartford, Conn.

American International College will also take on the redevelopment of the Indian Motorcycle buildings. One building already contains 139 housing units, which would be improved. The other building contains 57,000 square feet of vacant space, which would be used for both the college and commercial interests. All of the properties must still go through extensive evaluations.

"The fire station has been vacant for 30 years. [The second Indian Motorcycle building] was never redeveloped and has been sitting vacant." said John Short, one of the lead project developers for AIC. "We are very optimistic and very hopeful, but there is a lot of work."

AIC plans to meet with environmental officials about the conditions of the building, and will use their assessment to help finalize plans for these sites. Recreational facilities, a black box theatre, and learning centers are among the possibilities discussed.

AIC's initial proposal for this project would be a \$13 million investment. As the preferred developer for Mason Square, the college now has 135 days to present a formal plan to the city.

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