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American International College plans \$13 million redevelopment project of State Street in Springfield

By Peter Goonan, The Republican
May 18, 2010, 11:42AM

SPRINGFIELD – American International College is proposing a \$13 million redevelopment project on State Street that will include renovation and reuse of the long-vacant, boarded Mason Square fire station to include a cyber cafe, college radio station and possibly a small art gallery.

City officials, during a press conference outside the station site, announced that the college is the newly selected “preferred developer” of three properties at State Street and Wilbraham Road: the former fire station; the occupied, 137-unit Indian Motorcycle Apartments building and a second Indian Motorcycle building that is vacant and owned by the city.

As preferred developer, the college has 130 days to present formal plans for the site.



Vincent M. Maniaci

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno said while major improvements have occurred on the State Street corridor, the fire station has been vacant nearly 30 years in the heart of the Mason Square area.

The redevelopment of the station “will make this building shine,” Sarno said.

College President Vincent M. Maniaci said the college is pleased to work with the city and believes the project can help to improve the quality of life in the Mason Square area.

Financing, expected to include tax credits, needs to be pursued for the project.

Under the college’s proposal, there would be a cyber cafe on the first floor of the fire station along with an outdoor cafe component on the State Street side, and a glass gazebo to the rear. The upper floors would become home to the college’s communications program including the radio station, WAIC, and the television studio. The building is about 20,000 square feet.

The occupied apartment building will be renovated and upgraded, and to encourage its use by upper class and graduate students without displacing current tenants.

The college is considering a number of community, commercial and recreational uses for the adjacent, vacant 57,000 square foot building, possibly to include a small business incubator.

More details coming in The Republican.

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