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Bayboro praises builders

Instead of brickbats, developers get congrats

Jeff Aydelette

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October 18, 2006 - Breaking ground last week in Bayboro for Bay River Commons, a foursome of New Jersey investors won praise from elected officials more for breaking stereotype instead.

Commissioner Joe Himbry Jr., who also serves as both vice mayor and chairman of the town's revitalization committee, lauded developers Anthony Pollotta, Kevin Menaldo, Ken Bruno, and Sue Sprecker, for an approach worthy of emulation.

"These people have been user friendly," he said. "That is so important because others have not been. They wanted to know what the town would be looking for, what we were doing. This sets the model for how the private sector and the government can work together."

The building, on a corner formed by Highway 304 and the north prong of Bay River, will offer "flex space," an industry term for rental property that can be customized for tenants. Construction of a foundation and exterior shell should be finished by Christmas.

"This property is on a frontier that is ready to go," said Himbry, wearing his revitalization hat.

Pollotta stressed that he and his partners have whole-heartedly embraced the community.

"The difference is like night and day," he said. "It seems like everybody has an attitude up north. They're in a hurry. They don't want to talk. Here, someone will be standing on the curb and cars will stop to let you cross. That just does not happen in Jersey."

Menaldo agreed, quickly pinpointing the quartet's tromping grounds as within sight of ground zero.

"We're right across from Manhattan at the George Washington Bridge.

When the Towers fell we were watching," he recalled. "It's just a hole in the sky right now."

Pollotta and Menaldo know the construction business -- both have experience as building inspectors. The pair's entrepreneurial skills emerged as they began acquiring older homes, for remodel and resale.

The expertise comes across casually as they describe the project -- their first south of the Mason-Dixon line.

"We're building it structurally with the hope that we may be able to add a second story," said Pollotta. "We would have done it right away, but it's a little too risky for that."

Bruno designed the firm's website -- [ILoveBayboro.com](#) -- and he has offered Bayboro Mayor Paige Ackiss and Town Clerk Joan Leary free space for public announcements and other government tidbits.

Not only does Bruno bring cyberspace expertise, a quick calculation

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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



suggests financial acumen as well.

"About half," he responds, when asked to compare Pamlico County construction costs to those of New Jersey.

The quartet plan to use local contractors whenever possible.

"I am going to make this area my home," explained Pollotta. "I am coming here to retire. I want to meet everybody and get along with everybody."

The building, approximately 4,800 square feet, will feature a deck to take advantage of its waterfront location. Long-term plans call for a gazebo and perhaps a path to meander along the tributary.

Clean up of the site, which formerly housed a trailer park, has been extensive. A small pond on the property "even has fish," added Pollotta.

Clutching plans for the project, he exudes optimism.

"We see professional offices for a doctor or a lawyer, small retail shops, and maybe a luncheonette, which would make for a perfect spot over here by the water."

For rental information, contact Sail Loft Realty at 249-1787.

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