

Lauderhill project at Sunrise and State Road 7 gets early approval

By Susannah Bryan
Staff Writer

June 30, 2004

Lauderhill · A developer has grand plans for a desolate corner of State Road 7 and Sunrise Boulevard, once home to Kmart and McArthur Dairy.

Those plans moved a step closer to reality when George Rahael received tentative approval Monday night to purchase the long-vacant Kmart parcel for \$3 million and the McArthur Dairy site for \$2.9 million. The deal would become final at the next commission meeting on July 12.

Rahael, president of Amera Corp. in Coral Springs, plans to transform the Kmart parcel into a Caribbean marketplace and the dairy site into 100 town homes nestled next to a proposed hotel.

Both projects, which represent a total investment of \$108 million, would open in conjunction with the county's regional park and cricket stadium near the end of 2006, Rahael said.

The 13-acre Kmart site has been vacant since 1992, and the 10-acre dairy site across the street since 1997.

"We're getting a top-notch developer to come in and put something special here to be the catalyst for economic development in central Broward," City Manager Chuck Faranda said. "[Rahael] has the Midas touch when it comes to development. Everything he does is first-class."

Rahael's company has also developed The Walk office/retail project in Coral Springs as well as the Victoria Park Shoppes and Hub Plaza in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

A couple of years ago, Lauderdale paid \$4.3 million for the Kmart parcel and \$2.5 million for the dairy parcel, saying it wanted to retain control over how the corner was developed.

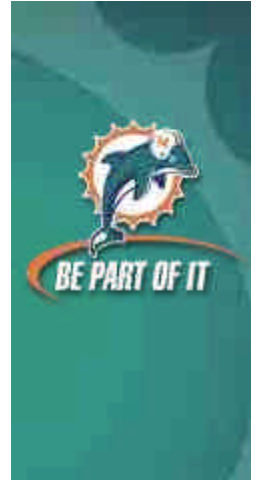
Soon after, the city issued a request for proposals that failed to lure developers. Faranda said Tuesday that he worried the city might have to donate the parcels to entice a developer to build.

The city's luck changed when Rahael came up with a two-fold plan to develop both sites.

Rahael plans to build a pedestrian bridge that will link the park with the marketplace, a mixture of restaurants and shops that will celebrate the region's multicultural roots. Rahael envisions sidewalk cafes and shops next to a hotel and office building for consulates from the Caribbean.

Monday night, Commissioner Dale Holness urged Rahael to hire local contractors to make up for the fact that the city was selling the land for less than its purchase price.

"It's been vacant for too long, and that's why I don't mind the concessions," Holness said after the meeting. "When that project is completed, it will start an explosion along 441 and send property values in Lauderdale all the way up. It will



Lauderhill project at Sunrise and State Road 7 gets early approval
bring people from all over."

Susannah Bryan can be reached at sbryan@sun-sentinel.com or 954-572-2028.

Copyright © 2004, [*South Florida Sun-Sentinel*](#)