

Mausert Block In Adams Secures Funding To Finish Project

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ADAMS, Mass. — MassDevelopment has stepped up to secure the funding needed for the developers of the Mausert Block to finish their renovation work.

Braytonville Properties LLC, owner of the Park Street building, is closing on a mortgage from MassDevelopment on Thursday and will use the money to complete the interior improvements. The company is **planning on turning the vacant building** into the home of three retail businesses — two restaurants and a dance studio — and market-rate apartment units.



The Board of Selectmen discussed the Solarize Mass program with Director of Community Development Donna Cesan.

"This gives us the green light to head toward the finish," Stephen Stenson, principal of Braytonville Properties, said on Wednesday after the Board of Selectmen approved a final legal document needed before closing.

The company was approved for the loan in June but on Tuesday town officials found out they needed to sign paperwork allowing MassDevelopment to have first rights if there is a default. It was approved on Wednesday as a late addition to the board's workshop agenda.

MassDevelopment is a state agency that secures funding for private and public projects to promote development and economic growth.

The town has a lien on the property to protect the \$125,000 in state **grants used to upgrade the facade**. According to Community Development Director Donna Cesan, that lien binds the company to continue upkeep of the facade and requires any major changes to the exterior be approved by the town.

"We always place a lien for the amount of the money directed to the project from the grant," Cesan said. "It is just a way to protect the investment of funds."

The subordination paperwork approved by the board on Wednesday allows MassDevelopment to be paid back first in cases of default.

With that paperwork, the company can now continue with the closing and has expects on an early spring opening of the restaurants and of the apartments shortly afterward.

"This allows us to complete the building and get it up and running by the spring," Stenson told the board. "This takes us to the end of construction."

The company had previously hoped to get the retail businesses **up and running by late summer of this year** but faced difficulty securing the right loan. While renovation work has continued, the project slowed while funding was sought, Stenson said.

In other business Wednesday, the Selectmen approved applying for the next round of the Solarize Mass program. Cesan told the Selectmen that the application would be easy to complete but the town will have to take steps to organize a marketing campaign to get as many people to participate as possible.

The program, launched by the state Clean Energy Commission, organizes group buys for residential photovoltaic arrays. The town would be asked to try and get as many people enrolled in the program to reduce the cost for all who participate.

"They emphasize the need to market the program," Cesan said. "They want numbers and we have to make that commitment."

The board appointed Selectman Michael Ouellette to head the effort and start organizing a committee that will take it over. The board is looking to hold at least two public meetings before submitting the application before the Oct. 22 deadline.

"I will do whatever I can," said Ouellette, who has been one of the most vocal in favor of the program. "I'm excited. I would love to see this happen here."

Cesan said the new committee formed will have to take the lead. The town would receive \$2,500 to help market the program.

The Selectmen did raise some questions about the effects the program has on local contractors and hopes to get some more information regarding their concerns before finalizing the application. Local solar companies have questioned the program in the past.