

Lake Placid misses purchase deadline But project still a go, says River Landing developer

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A developer has missed a deadline to buy the River Landing site for its proposed hotel-condo-retail-office project, but a company official says construction will get underway by spring.

Lake Placid Developments had until Monday to pay the \$4.55 million outstanding for the city-owned site south of 19th Street, across from Persephone Theatre. Lake Placid made two downpayments totalling \$250,000 late last year.

The sale agreement between the city and Lake Placid allows for the developer to delay the purchase as long as it pays interest.

Lake Placid has agreed to do just that, said Chris Dekker, the city's manager of special projects.

The delay is due to over-consolidating five separate land titles for the property, said Richard Lobsinger, vice-president of sales for Lake Placid. Once the company has the consolidated title, it can close its purchase of the land, he said.

Financing has become more difficult to secure during the recession, but Lobsinger said Lake Placid has lots of interest from lenders. Financing is not yet officially in place.

The developer has an excavation permit but isn't allowed to do any work until it completes the site purchase, Dekker said. The city can take back the property if the developer doesn't complete digging on the site by June 30, even if the company has paid in full for the site.

The city's manager of building standards, Bob Baran, has estimated digging up the site will take four to six months. But Lobsinger said work will start in spring and be complete by the deadline.

Lake Placid has sold out the first phase of condo sales and will begin selling this spring its higher-priced penthouses and larger suites facing the river, Lobsinger said. Those units already have waiting lists, he said.

"I think people are pretty anxious for the larger suites," Lobsinger said. "Downtown on the riverbank, there's still huge demand."

He couldn't say how many deposits Lake Placid has taken on its condos.

Tenant announcements for other aspects of the project will happen shortly, Lobsinger said.

Mayor Don Atchison said he's "anxiously waiting" for construction to begin because of the project's importance. With condos, a hotel, shops and offices, Lake Placid will bring people to River Landing at virtually all times and seasons, he said.

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