

HAMPTON VA

NEWS RELEASE

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Barking Dog, Deadrise owners plan new restaurant in former feed store downtown

Sept. 20, 2016 - The business partners who renovated a sandwich shop on Sunset Creek into the The Barking Dog - and a marina's second story into the Fort Monroe seafood restaurant The Deadrise - plan a new Hampton restaurant, which was approved by the Economic Development Authority Tuesday morning.

Business partners Sean Pepe, Gary McIntyre and Joe Illes see potential in the abandoned Watkins Feed Store at 334 W. Queen St., built in 1930, and submitted a proposal to buy the property from the Hampton Economic Development Authority. Much like their two other Hampton restaurants, this building will require a good deal of renovation, they said.

EDA Chairwoman Eleanor Brown said, "This is a local business with a very successful track record. People are going to want to go there to eat because of their reputation."

In addition to the restaurant, the group proposes two loft apartments on the second floor. The plan echoes the vision in the city's 2004 Downtown Master Plan, which envisioned mixed-use for the site, which is in the downtown Master Plan area. The developers plan to "restore the building and keep its character and charm," their proposal says.

Pepe said the building is what prompted the venture. "We like the downtown area, but this idea is really about the bones of the building. We fell in love with it."

In a video for the city's "Choose Hampton" campaign in 2014, Pepe described Hampton as "kind of the final frontier, where people are making some changes here in Hampton, making it a fun place to visit, to go out to eat. ... We are thrilled to be here in Hampton. ... We've been extremely successful, and we're very happy with how things have turned out."

The building will be sold for \$107,100, with all but \$1 credited because of the condition of the building, which needs a roof replacement and repairs to moisture-damaged masonry and wood, in addition to the restaurant build-out. The restaurant expects to employ 40-60 people and generate \$150,000 in annual tax revenues after it opens in about 18 months.



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