

City taking steps toward old courthouse demolition

Request for Proposals seeking bids to take down former City Hall, Duval County Courthouse in the works.

By David Cawton
Staff Writer

Jacksonville's Downtown riverfront could be closer to demolition.

The city is working on a Request for Proposals seeking bids to demolish the former Jacksonville City Hall and Duval County Courthouse buildings.

It's the first indication of progress toward the demolition of the vacant buildings along East Bay Street.

Mayor Lenny Curry earmarked \$8 million in his \$1.2 billion budget for the job as part of the \$131 million capital improvement plan.

DEMOLITION CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



The former Duval County Courthouse along East Bay Street is slated for demolition, although no date has been set.

Demolition

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

The RFP is the subject of a meeting scheduled Thursday morning between Chief Administrative Officer Sam Mousa and Aundra Wallace, executive director of the Downtown Investment Authority.

Wallace said Wednesday any information about a potential RFP should be directed to the city.

An assistant general counsel assigned to handle public records requests said no drafts are available but that an RFP or a draft should be available for review within two weeks.

A request for comment from the mayor's office was not immediately returned.

Florida law requires the city to publicly advertise its Request for Proposals to solicit bids from prospective parties, typically for at least 30 days, for any purchase of supplies or contractual services for capital improvements of more than \$65,000.

The pending demolition is one of several potential developments along Bay Street, including the Shipyards and Metropolitan Park projects helmed by Jacksonville Jaguars owner Shad Khan.

Curry has been adamant about his desire to redevelop the Northbank riverfront, including the vacant, half-built structure that was to become the Berkman Plaza II.

The city is demolishing the

parking deck that collapsed in 2015 along Liberty Street and Coastline Drive behind the courthouse.

In 2011, the Jacksonville Civic Council Northbank Redevelopment Task Force recommended that the Duval County Courthouse and Annex site be developed as a convention center and exhibition hall.

In August, Curry said more than one party had expressed interest in developing the land. "At this stage, it's just that," he said.

The city moved most of the legislative and executive branch departments in 1997 to the St. James Building at 117 W. Duval St., although some departments

and the State Attorney's Office used the space for several more years.

Courthouse operations relocated in 2012 to the new Duval County Courthouse at 501 W. Adams St.

Although the buildings are vacant, taxpayers still are paying for their upkeep.

Over the summer, a city spokeswoman said that from August 2016 to July 2017, the city spent nearly \$90,000 on electricity, water and sewer services for the two buildings – about \$7,500 a month.

dcawton@jaxdailyrecord.com
@davidcawton
(904) 356-2466

MISSING - \$10,000 REWARD



MARK ANTHONY DEGNER
Photo age progressed to 22 yrs
DOB: 7/13/92
Hair: Dark Blonde
Eyes: Hazel

If you have any information, please call Jacksonville Sheriff's Office 904-630-0500 or Crime Stoppers 1-866-845-TIPS.

Last seen Feb. 10, 2005 at Paxon Middle School on westside of Jacksonville, FL



BRIAN ANDREW HAYES
Photo age progressed to 18 yrs
DOB: 12/18/91
Hair: Red
Eyes: Green

Verizon Wireless LLC, 5432 Blanding Blvd., contractor is Ascend Wireless Networks Inc., antenna replacement, \$65,000.

Verizon Wireless LLC, 5800 Bell Road, contractor is Betacom Inc., antenna replacement, \$65,000.

Compiled by Scott Sailer



Surety Bond Solutions Machinery Insurance, Inc.

Founded in 1986
Florida Based

Rated "B++" by A.M. Best Company

Directors & Officers

Fitzhugh K. Powell, Sr. – President, Treasurer & Director
Benjamin K. Powell – Vice President & Director
Stephen T. Cumella – Secretary, Chairman & Director
Rosemary G. Klemmt, Asst. Secretary/Treasurer & Director

Exclusive Agent

Cecil W. Powell & Company

Telephone 904-353-3181; www.cwpowellins.com
Agents: Robert Theus, Walter Myers, Benjamin K. Powell
Account Manager: Annette Evans

Licensed to write Surety Bonds
Ocean Marine & Inland Marine Insurance