

## Developers discuss plan for 'Arsenal Project' in Watertown

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WATERTOWN — Local developers recently took their first step towards remodeling the Arsenal Mall.

Boylston Properties, The Wilder Companies, and partner Jonathan Bush, president of Athenahealth announced their plan to redevelop the Arsenal Mall during a press conference Wednesday Nov. 20. Dubbed the "Arsenal Project," the group said they'd like to add restaurants, better connect the area to the Charles River, and possibly build residential units on the property.

"We want it to be more fun." William P. McQuillan, president of Boylston Properties said. "We want it to include restaurants, and food, and some outdoor seating, and every bit of chance to enjoy outdoor dining while you're enjoying views of the Charles River."

McQuillan said will take some time to accomplish those goals, but that the group is looking forward to working with town officials in the coming months and years on the project.

"There will be lots to do," McQuillan, said. "We're anxious to work with the town to figure out what works for [all of you]."

Thomas V. Wilder, owner of The Wilder Companies added that the group welcomes input from both town officials and residents.

"Please give us your feedback," Wilder said. "We know this can be great, but we need input. We need the collaboration of the town, the community, the retailers to help us figure out what this wants to be."

Town Council President Mark Sideris said he's already spoken with McQuillan who made a \$1,500 donation to the Watertown High School football Gridiron club after the football team helped clean up behind the mall as community service.

"He's been talking about his vision," Sideris said. "We walked through the mall several months ago as soon as they bought it and he talked about what he's looking to do here and I think it's exciting. It's exciting for Watertown."

"It's going to be great going forward because they want to be part of Watertown," Sideris said.

Councilor Cecilia Lenk echoed Sideris' sentiments that the redevelopment of the mall is an exciting opportunity for the town. Lenk said when the mall was originally developed it didn't reach it's full potential.

"It's great to have a second chance," Lenk said. "Hopefully we'll really work with them and get something that not only Watertown, but the surrounding communities would [really] enjoy."

Councilor-elect Aaron Dushku was also in attendance and said that he liked the groups ideas and that he would like to see storm water runoff in the mall parking lots, more local business operating in the mall.

"I want to see if there's a way to find a reserve spots for locally owned independants as best we can," Dushku said. "There's only one, maybe two of those in the mall now that I know of, and I want to make sure those guys survive and we open up new opportunities for new ones."

Dushku also said that he's looking forward to working with the group on the project.

"The best thing I've heard is that they're willing to listen," Dushku said. "So we're going to plan it together, and I look forward to being part of that conversation."

In addition to announcing their plans to redevelop the mall, the group also made a \$5,000 donation to the Watertown Food Pantry Jonathan Bush said.

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