



Progress slow on variety of metro area deals

By Tom Harton

As 2011 draws to a close, Real Estate Weekly checked on the status of several projects reported here over the last year, and a few from much longer ago. Many are still in progress, confirming that the real estate market is still sluggish.

- In Zionsville, the town is in the process of clearing a 2.4-acre site it considers a gateway to the Zionsville village retail area. The town has toyed with the idea of buying the property at the intersection of State Road 334 and Zionsville Road for two years, but there's no deal in the works, said Town Manager Edward Mitro.

Instead, the city struck a deal with the same Minnesota family that has owned the site for more than 40 years to raze an old gas station and car wash on the property. The demolition, at Zionsville's expense, is timed to clean up the area before the arrival of Super Bowl visitors in late January, said Mitro, who has heard a developer is interested in the property. It was listed with Cassidy Turley two years ago for \$2 million.

- Browning Investments has shelved, but not ruled out, plans to develop an 8,900-square-foot retail strip center where an old Peoples Bank branch stands at the southeast corner of 86th Street and Harcourt Road. Back in March, the developer was preparing to buy the site from St. Vincent Hospital and begin construction of the \$1.9 million project. It would have been the developer's first retail project in several years.

James Browning, the company's vice president of real estate development, said plans are on hold while the hospital re-evaluates its plans for the site. A larger retail project—two 15,000-square-foot strips at 131st and Meridian streets—is still in the pipeline for 2012, Browning said. Tenant interest will determine whether one or two buildings are developed at the site, he said.

- Just south of Massachusetts Avenue, at North Street and Park Avenue, investors closed last summer on the purchase of a three-story, 12,000-square-foot brick building that dates to 1892, a small cottage and a vacant lot. The properties, all at the southeast corner of the intersection, are now owned by a partnership that involves a local attorney who specializes in international adoptions. The building, which will house office space, and cottage are both being renovated.

The seller, North Lockerbie LLC, a decade ago was the financial muscle behind what would have been a large mixed-use development involving dozens of properties in the area. The project didn't happen, and Ross Reller, a broker with Colliers International, was hired to dispose of the properties. Reller said his client is in negotiations to sell the northeast corner of Park and North and next year will list for sale almost an entire city block between Park and Michigan, North and Leon streets.

- In Fountain Square, Bryce Caldwell is at least six months behind in renovating and expanding a 110-year-old building at 1110 Shelby Street. He bought the 8,000-square-foot building a year ago and still plans a 4,200-square-foot addition. When finished, the building is to house a bar, restaurant and 450-seat music hall.

There is little visible progress on the project, which Caldwell had hoped to open by New Year's Day. Mark Stewart, president of Southeast Neighborhood Development, a community development corporation that operates in the area and is a supporter of the music hall project, said the project is still in the works.

- Satori Pointe, a mixed-use development in Avon that's been in the works for more than a year, is on the verge of landing three tenant/developers, according to brokers marketing the project. The almost 30-acre complex on the north side of

U.S. 36 is anchored by the 122,000-square-foot Hendricks Regional Health YMCA.

Five development sites ranging from four to nine acres in size were listed in 2010 with Summit Realty Group brokers Tim Norton and Jeff Merritt for between \$450,000 and \$850,000 an acre. Two were being offered for retail use, two for office/professional use and one for apartments and/or seniors housing. The land is owned by Hendricks Regional Health, which partnered with YMCA on the health/fitness complex.

- The owner of a pair of century-old buildings on East Market Street downtown is still in negotiations with potential buyers

of the buildings or entities that would partner with the owner to convert them into apartments or a boutique hotel.

Crown Property Group took the rare step earlier this year of issuing a request for proposals in an attempt to find a buyer or partner for the buildings at 136 E. Market Street and 129 E. Market. The buildings are sparsely populated, but the one at 136 Market houses a Stock Yards Bank branch. Responses to the RFP were due Nov. 1. Summit Realty Group broker Amy Burmeister said there is interest in the buildings but a deal is not imminent. •