

Haverhill Local News May 15, 2015



Randall Bennett helps complete the Harbor Place puzzle.

A local accountant has purchased the fifth—and top—floor of the planned Harbor Place commercial building at the corner of Main and Merrimack Streets. It was one of the final pieces necessary to guarantee construction of the building that will sit in place of the former F.W. Woolworth's.

Randall Bennett of Randall Bennett & Company P.C., 109 Washington St., signed replica closing documents this morning along with representatives of Pentucket Bank, who will occupy the fourth floor; UMass Lowell, which will lease the second and third floors; and Haverhill Community Television, which purchased a first floor corner condominium.

“That was a great board of directors, stepping up, investing in our city, saying that’s the important

parcel for the future of our downtown,” said Rep. Brian S. Dempsey, commending the Greater Haverhill Foundation for its vision in buying the former Woolworth’s. He also said the foundation’s arrangements with the Boston Archdiocese’ Public Office of Urban Affairs is “truly a terrific partnership.”

Bennett told WHAV he has no particular plans for the fifth floor, but may re-sell or lease space.

The city of Haverhill has received a total of \$19.3 million in state MassWorks grants over two years to make the project possible. Some of that money was used in the last week to pay off the foundation’s \$3.9 million mortgage to Pentucket Bank, Ronald Trombley, manager, confirmed today. Haverhill Mayor James J. Fiorentini thanked Trombley and Sally Cerasuolo-O’Rourke for their efforts.

Trombley thanked the presidents of two local banks for having the vision to support redevelopment of many blocks of mostly vacant buildings. He said it is unusual to have two non-investor-owned owned banks in a city these days. Scott Cote, president of Pentucket Bank and chairman of the foundation, and Thomas Mortimer, president of Haverhill Bank and foundation vice president, were acknowledged for financing smaller aspects of the project, while Bank of America handles a \$30 million construction loan.

“Things were always on the move. I’m going to state the obvious—this was not a simple project. If it was, it would have been done a long time ago. But, all along the way, the part that most impressed me was that there were hurdles, almost every month or so there was a hurdle. It didn’t matter if it was the city’s hurdle or the state’s hurdle, everyone enthusiastically addressed it. No complaining. It was so impressive. Not once did I hear someone complaining they had too much work to do,” Mortimer said.

Richard Henderson, executive vice president, of the quasi-public MassDevelopment, said even more state aid is coming. He said MassDevelopment is providing “enhanced technical assistance” and may invest money in other downtown projects. Henderson added the city is one of only three “Districts in Development” to have a transformative development initiative (TDI) fellow assigned to work three years for the city. The appointment of Noah Koretz was previously reported by WHAV April 3. Koretz will work from the offices of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, across Main Street from city hall.



Haverhill Bank President and CEO Thomas L. Mortimer.



Noah Koretz.

The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, another state-funded economic development agency, has hired two people to work with the Greater Haverhill Foundation, said Pamela Goldberg, chief executive officer and a native of Haverhill. Brian J. Groth and Peter Abair will “assess existing Haverhill conditions and market trends, while identifying opportunities to retain existing businesses and grow,” Groth said.

Groth is a project manager and designer based out of Portsmouth, N.H. His portfolio includes work in a variety of urban settings on urban design, marketing, real estate, redevelopment strategy, public spaces and graphic design. He brings over ten years’ experience in a variety of public and

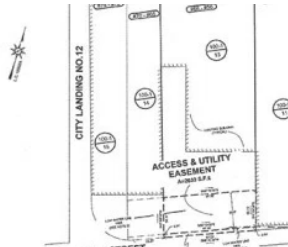
private sector projects. His creative vision, analytical skills, and public outreach experience are assets he brings to the Haverhill Partnership that will allow him to play the lead role in implementing a strategic plan for Haverhill.

Peter Abair is MassBio’s director of economic and global affairs. In his position, he provides consulting services to companies looking to locate to or grow in Massachusetts, manages MassBio’s global partners programs, and leads the development and publication of the Industry Snapshot—MassBio’s annual economic analysis of the life sciences industry. Prior to joining MassBio, he served the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in several economic development functions including director of the Massachusetts Department of Economic Development, Massachusetts Office of Business Development and associate director of the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. He has served in the administrations of four governors and began his career on the Washington, D.C. staff of the late Congressman Silvio O. Conte. Abair holds a Bachelor’s degree from Boston University and a Masters from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. A native of Pittsfield, he now resides with his family in Sudbury, where he serves on several local boards.

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