

# LEGACY PLAZA MAKING PROGRESS

Construction of apartments and fundraising for greenspace mark significant milestones for the revitalization of old Maytag buildings

The development of Legacy Plaza has seen significant progress over the past year. Tenants have been moving in to the 78-unit apartment complex known as Plant 1 Lofts, and DMACC has since launched a \$4 million fundraising campaign for the greenspace that will be hosting the Newton Farmers Market this year.

Inside the apartments of Plant 1 Lofts in Buildings 16 and 50 of Legacy Plaza is a setting few rental properties have achieved in Newton thus far. It is a space rooted in rich history and uplifted by developers who have not only embraced its classic qualities but also let them thrive in a significantly more modern design.

Rebecca Crady, property manager of Plant 1 Lofts, said the newly opened apartments offer occupants a “small town living with big city vibes.” And the fact these units used to be intrinsic parts in the Maytag Corporation operations — just look at the photos on the walls — only adds to the facility’s overall character.

High ceilings complement the exposed wooden beams and brickwork prevalent in each unit. Tall windows cast a blanket of natural light into each space and its modern furnishings. The handful of lofts available to tenants only amplify these qualities, and they are the most breathtaking units of the bunch.

There is no laundry room because every unit has its own washer and dryer. There are no patios because Plant 1 Lofts is affixed with its own clubhouse, outdoor fire pits and lounge area for residents to enjoy. There is easy access to other amenities in Legacy Plaza, like the pub and brewery in the next building.

For many years Buildings 16 and 20 were nothing more than empty spaces filled with tall pillars, and many, many years before that they were part of Maytag operations. The first floor of Building 16 was home to manufacturing in the 1940s, and the upper floors were a warehouse of washers and other parts.

When the Newton-based manufacturer closed its headquarters and plants in the mid-2000s, these buildings were entrusted to DMACC, who envisioned a multi-use campus now known as Legacy Plaza. Slowly but surely DMACC had begun filling the buildings, developing plans for the future and creating excitement.

Plant 1 Lofts is the culmination of several partners coming together toward one goal,

and the project serves as a major turning point for Legacy Plaza.

Christensen Development led the rehabilitation of the 78-unit Plant 1 Lofts with the assistance from partners like the State of Iowa, Jasper County, City of Newton, DMACC, Newton Development Corporation and Bank Iowa. All are recognized in a dedication plaque next to the clubhouse entrance.

Project team members like Beal Derkenne Construction, Slingshot Architecture, Axiom Consultants, Raker Rhodes Engineering, Brockway Mechanical, Tesdell Electric, Heartland Finishes and the Jasper County Historical Museum also played a big part in making sure the project was fully realized.

There is more to come in the second phase of the project in Buildings 1 and 2. Currently, the plan is to develop the brick buildings into 49 extended-stay hotel rooms and studio apartments. The iconic facade will mark the location of a future cocktail bar on the lower level.

Last fall, fundraising campaigns for what DMACC calls the “centerpiece” of the Legacy Plaza project started, allowing investors opportunities to not only beautify the ever-developing greenspace, located at the site of an old Maytag production facility, but also participate in paving the way for a new future for Newton.

DMACC Foundation announced is is launching a public initiative to fundraise \$4 million for the greenspace. Tara Connolly, executive director of the DMACC Foundation, said more than half of the fundraising goal has already been contributed by alumni, area residents and businesses.

“This is a special project for potential donors to be recognized for leaving a living legacy to their community and future generations of DMACC students and Newton residents to use, appreciate and reflect on Newton’s heritage,” Connolly said in a press release from DMACC.

When fully con-

structed, the greenspace will include a walking trail with shade trees, a covered multi-use pavilion for summer concerts and an ice rink in the winter, an open area for recreation and a large art sculpture anchoring the south entrance. The walking path will connect the Legacy Plaza campus to downtown.

Established in 1993 through a gift from the Maytag Corporation, the DMACC Newton Campus has been in control of the former headquarters and other adjoining buildings just north of the college campus property for about eight years. The plan to develop the buildings into Legacy Plaza took shape in 2017.

Kim Didier, executive director of DMACC Business Resources and manager of the greenspace project, told Newton News the college has enjoyed its role in collaborating with its partners to breathe life back into the campus. She commended the masterplanning feedback from 2017 as a major help.

From those discussions with community members, the idea of connecting the DMACC

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Photos provided by Plant1Lofts.com (top) and DMACC (bottom)



## Cont. 19

envisioned would pull people together and foster community.

"We've always wanted the campus to be a multi-use neighborhood with those kinds of amenities that we now have, like the brewery, the taproom, yoga every Tuesday night," Didier said, noting DMACC wanted to also support entrepreneurs and office tenants at Legacy Plaza to bring vitality to the area.

For Didier, the greenspace is not only the centerpiece of Legacy Plaza, it's the crowning jewel. To make sure people appreciate both the courtyard and the upcoming greenspace and the history that is part of both of those spaces, there will be a breezeway on the far east of Building 16 that is open to the public.

"It lets people move from the courtyard to the greenspace," she said. "It's kind of this juxtaposed space in the sense that the courtyard creates

this very scalable, cozy kind of feeling and such. And then when you move through the breezeway and go through the greenspace you have this expansive, open space."

Walking the circumference of greenspace is about a quarter of a mile. The greenspace itself is about the size of a football field, and DMACC hopes it becomes a regular pathway for community members. By spring 2025 is when DMACC is planning to install a main sculpture in the greenspace.

Spanning 23 feet wide and 18 feet tall, the sculpture is made possible by the generosity of the Vernon Company and the Vernon family.

"It's going to have a 6-foot sphere in the middle made of stainless steel," Didier said. "Not that it's as big as 'The Bean' at Millennium Park in Chicago, but it will still be pretty big that you'll get these reflections. And we hope it will be something

people will want to take pictures with and be seen with."

Construction of the greenspace and its amenities has already begun. Didier said DMACC has so far completed the concrete walkways and light poles that will be outfitted with the college's banners. Bollards have been constructed as well. Forty-five trees and a number of perennials have been planted.

Seeing a courtyard full of people enjoying themselves time and time again has only reaffirmed what DMACC already knows: that Legacy Plaza is a viable project and that there is a market for what the campus as a whole can provide. Didier said DMACC has worked hard and has almost hit that tipping point.

"It took a vision and it took those little pieces to try and have that happen," she said. "...What brings us to that tipping point is the housing with the apartments and also shortly after that will be the boutique hotel ... There is a

certain authenticity to this."

Other communities are trying to carry out similar projects with the same look and feel as Legacy Plaza. But Didier said what makes Newton's project stand out is its historical foundations. The Maytag buildings carry with them their own history, and the new architecture will reflect on that past in the greenspace.

"All of this is on the theme of 'past, present and future.' So the materials (for shade structures) are materials used in the past manufacturing processes," she said. "Images in the screens are very similar to how inner tubs in washers were made and the patterns that were a part of that."

It is these details that give respect to those who had laid the foundation for the community generations ago. But now, Didier said, they have a new purpose.

"The assets of our past generation now become the assets of our future generation."

— Christopher Braunschweig

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