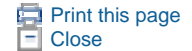


SPRINGFIELD NEWS-SUN



Work to raze Memorial Hall under way

By Samantha Sommer, Staff Writer

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SPRINGFIELD — Memorial Hall will soon be a memory.

The first steps to demolish Memorial Hall started Wednesday as crews from N.R. Lee Restorations began cleaning the facade, said Kevin Loftis of Midland Properties.

Midland represents owner Healthy City Investments, which intends to sell the 300 W. Main St. property to National Trail Parks and Recreation District for an ice arena.

The next step is to do a computer-assisted drawing of the facade and number the pieces so it can be reassembled. The pieces will likely start to come down next week, Loftis said.

That process should take about four weeks and then will be followed by demolition, which also should take about a month. The site should be ready for National Trail by December, Loftis said.

The recreation district is preparing to sign the sale contract and schedule a closing. The sale price is not to exceed \$825,000.

If all goes well with the design and review process, the ice arena, with a total project cost of \$5.5 million, could go to bid in the first quarter of next year, with construction starting soon after, said National Trail CEO Tim Smith. That could mean it might open in early 2012.

“It’s a fluid time line until we see how our review process goes,” Smith said.

The district would like to reuse Memorial Hall’s facade and is working with architects WDC Group to come up with possible designs for that, Smith said. But that will depend on feasibility and cost.

Possibilities include reusing the columns out front of the rink and some of the limestone as benches.

The rink is the final piece of the district’s \$17 million, 10-year capital campaign that was paid for by a combination of private and public dollars and included Splash Zone Family Aquatics Center and Carleton Davidson Stadium.

“When folks see it and get involved in it, they will be excited,” Smith said. “It’s something new and exciting and a positive asset for our community.”

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