

Channelside Project

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Development Plan Grows to Lofty Scale

By Janis Froelich

CHANNEL DISTRICT - When Sarasota developer Eric Collin announced plans last summer for a hotel and condominiums, the project was contained on the former Amazon Hose & Rubber Co. property, 222 N. 12th St.

But now that Collin and his partner, Enzo Gagliardi of Finergy Development LLC, have bought the neighboring property, a former food storage warehouse, their 2-acre project could be one of the Channel District's largest.

Collin and Gagliardi told about a dozen people at a Channel District Council meeting Wednesday that they plan 274 residential units, 119 hotel rooms and retail, possibly including a grocery store.

Even though the developers of Grand Central at Kennedy plan to open a Publix in the under-construction complex, Collin said, another grocery store right across the street could work.

"We're not final on what we'll do with the retail, but we definitely want a big anchor store," he said of the 22,620-square-foot ground floor.

Finergy also plans an 8,000-square-foot park behind its complex and a plaza in front.

"This is a pretty prominent site," said architect Richard Zingale of Urban Studios. "This corner at Kennedy will be very busy."

Finergy, a subsidiary of a French real estate development company, plans for half of the residences, housed in a 25-story, 280-foot tower, to be studios starting at 450 square feet.

Collin said prices haven't been set, but the studios will allow young professionals to afford city living. He plans to begin seeking city council zoning approval within two weeks.

Resident Francine Messano said she wasn't too impressed by the design of the project, called The Kennedy Residences of Channelside. "We are looking for something exceptional in this neighborhood," she said.

City urban planner Wilson Stair said Finergy should pay attention to its project's south wall, which will face the community. "Plant some trees," he said.

Stair also recommended using a textured, attractive material and adding color for screening the floors of parking. "Metal screening," he said, "can look like a bombed-out building in Beirut."

