

Nokomis Hotel

Venice Gondolier Newspaper



July 31, 2009

Eyesore Will Be No More

By Roger Button

This weekend as you drive along U.S. 41 in Nokomis, take one last look at a landmark of a past era.

On Monday, the eyesore that is the former Nokomis gas station at Albee Road West will disappear forever at the hands of a demolition team.

For around 40 years the old building has withstood storms, scorching summers and, more recently, use by contractors for the major road improvements in Nokomis. A local resident recalls buying gas at the Sadie's Shell Station in the late '60s. The business is said to have closed in the early '70s.

Finergy Development acquired the whole property in 2003, intending to take advantage of a building and economic boom by starting an \$18 million construction upgrade for the area. Plans included a Hilton Garden Hotel, residences, retail units and a commercial building.

The start of the project would be tearing down the derelict gas station. By the time plans had been finalized and permit applications were in process, the economy had nosedived into a recession. Finergy had no option but to put the project on hold and wait for encouraging signs of economic improvement.

"Last week the county commissioners gave us an 18-month extension approval," said Eric Collin, Finergy executive vice president. "Now there is no reason to keep the gas station building, so it is coming down as we want to be a good neighbor."

He confirmed that Hilton remains under contract. Unfortunately in this area, hotel occupancy numbers continue to be down 30 percent this year compared to last year, said Collin. He is awaiting the effects of the upcoming season, which will determine if there is a recovery.

Finergy plans to begin construction next year, when it has completed a new Hampton Inn at the Sarasota Bradenton International Airport.