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KANSAS CITY BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Developers, city reach agreement on East Village

Kansas City Business Journal - March 8, 2006 by [Jim Davis](#) Staff Writer

Supporters of the proposed East Village development project signed a memorandum of understanding with Kansas City officials on Wednesday, clearing the way for a request to the Missouri General Assembly for financial assistance.

"The East Village and the city will work with the state and each other to finalize this project," said David Frantze, a Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP lawyer representing Swope Community Builders.

A request for state supplemental tax increment financing will be sent to the Legislature "as soon as we possibly can," Frantze said.

Swope, a community development corporation that organized East Village LLC, wants to build 1,200 housing units in a Quality Hill-style neighborhood covering 12 blocks east of City Hall. The project also would include a new headquarters for J.E. Dunn Construction Co.

State supplemental TIF would divert state taxes generated by the development to offset the cost of public improvements such as a parking garage for Dunn's headquarters. The building is planned for a now-vacant block bounded by 10th and 11th streets between Locust and Cherry streets.

David Fenley, a lawyer with Blackwell Sanders Peper Martin LLP who's representing J.E. Dunn, said the Legislature will need to authorize state supplemental TIF before this year's session ends in May. Dunn officials also want the city to demolish what they call blighting influences, such as the Cherry Street Inn, 921 Cherry St.

"However the city can capitalize state and local TIF to remove blight, we're all for it," Fenley said. "We've just got to know that (blight removal) is going to happen."

The Tax Increment Financing Commission of Kansas City, which had been scheduled to consider the East Village on Wednesday, postponed its hearing until April. Fenley said the application will seek Super TIF designation that would divert all new property and economic activity taxes.

TIF usually captures all property taxes and half of sales, earnings and other economic activity taxes.

Fenley said attention on the East Village has shifted to Jefferson City. Emissaries in Jefferson City on Wednesday included Spencer Thomson from Blackwell Sanders; Greg Williams, an aide to Kansas City Mayor Kay Barnes; Swope CEO Kelvin Simmons; and Woody Overton, representing J.E. Dunn.

"It's everybody's goal and condition that the plan doesn't work unless the blighted properties are acquired and demolished," Fenley said, "and the plan doesn't work unless Dunn builds a new national headquarters."

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