

# Developer ready to take Everts Gym off city's hands

- By Steven Collins Senior Reporter
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CIRCLEVILLE — A local developer is ready to take the reins on the Everts Gym and Industrial Arts wing of the former school building and is just waiting on some final due diligence from the city.

Jon Bialy, owner and CEO of Bialy Corp, a local development business, spoke to Circleville City Council members on their company's plan to take the building and develop it with the idea to partner with local organizations.

Bialy said they're working on starting a nonprofit to manage the building.

"We need to put together the structure of what this building is going to be," he said. "We're ready to move forward if the council is ready [for us] to take ownership of it."

Bialy said they're going to follow the rules attached to buildings, such as Everts, with a historic designation, and abide by the rules of the grants and any deal they strike with the city.

"I've met with a representative from the state and [the building] is designated for the arts and it can be transferred to a private entity," he said. "There is a 10-year liability period in which it has to conform to the rules of that grant."

Bialy said he's spoken with several interested groups including the Pickaway Arts and Life Center, The Pickaway Diablos, St. Joseph's Church, Crossroads Church, and a local nonprofit that provides mattresses. He said they've also talked with baseball and basketball teams about using the facilities.

"I said from the very first meeting, I feel [Dan Coy lead pastor at Crossroads Church] brought a really good product and we bring the development side these nonprofits they also bring a very valid product that I think can complement one another," Bialy said, speaking about Crossroads Church idea to locate their Christian Academy there after running out of space at their current facility.

Bialy said they're doing this project for the community and depending on the approvals, they could have the gym ready by the end of the year.

"We have people lined up to do the electricity right away and start taking the next steps," he said. "By December we could have things going on there."

Ike Wampler, owner and CFO of Bialy Corp, also told council that they would start with the gym first before moving on to the industrial arts wing.

"We're focused on it because it's the easiest to get repaired and get online," he said. "The rest of it will take quite a lot of repair to get online."

Circleville Mayor Don McIlroy said he was instructed by council to meet with the developers and to take a look at transferring the property through Pickaway Progress Partnership (P3), which he has done.

"If council chooses to do [the transfer] we could do that very quickly and use P3 as the conduit to make that happen, very similar to what we did with the property on South Court Street."

The groups will come together again on Aug. 20 at 6 p.m. for a committee-of-the-whole meeting and final review on the potential transfer, ensuring that the grant terms are fulfilled.

"We were the applicant on those grants, and we have to ensure that the grants are fulfilled based on how we wrote the application," council President David Crawford.