

Investors have yacht basin under contract

May 12, 2011

By Laura Elder

Hot to yacht? This might float some boats around here. After several months of speculation, there's fresh news on the post-Hurricane Ike status of the Galveston Yacht Basin, 715 Holiday Drive N., on the island.

Investors John Rocky Sullivan, Gregory Pappas and Stephen Swan are reported to have the Yacht Basin property under contract and have submitted plans to the city to restore the clubhouse and marina to their pre-Ike glory, according to the University Area Association's May newsletter.

Sullivan declined to elaborate until plans are further along. The investors have entered a contract to buy the Yacht Basin from Harbor Properties, a subsidiary of philanthropic organization The Sealy & Smith Foundation.

Harbor Properties made some repairs to the marina and continues to operate it. But the clubhouse and 30-year-old restaurant have been closed since Hurricane Ike struck in September 2008.

The investors intend to restore and reopen the clubhouse and restaurant, open a retail center at the site and build a dry storage area for boats from 20 feet to 45 feet long. The dry storage area would have the capacity to house up to 140 boats. The investors also plan to reopen the pool and tennis courts. Stay tuned.

Low down: Some readers want to know when Lowe's Home Improvement will get hammering on its proposed island store on 11.39 acres between 55th and 57th streets. (The store is proposed for county-owned land in front of the Criminal Justice Center.)

Officials with the Mooresville, N.C.-based retail giant could not immediately be reached for comment Wednesday. But all signs point to progress.

On April 19, the island planning commission approved a general land use plan and a specific use permit for the development. Stay tuned.

Trivia time: Meanwhile, did you know that Lowe's CEO Robert Niblock grew up on the island? Niblock, 48, lived in a house near 42nd Street and T1/2. Buzz is working to nail down more information about Niblock's time as a Galvestonian. Niblock joined Lowe's in 1993, holding several positions before being named CEO-elect in 2004.

Tea time: Look for Texas Tea Room & Café, 709 W. Parkwood, in Friendswood, to add grilled sandwiches, new salads and soups, two new desserts and more kid-friendly offerings.

Eatery owners Kim Oravetz and business partners plan to soon reveal more details about those new menu items. Texas Tea Room & Café, which also serves hot and cold teas and other beverages, opened in January last year in the building formerly occupied by Hickory and Oak Smoked Barbecue.

Oravetz and business partners Autumn Wenner and Deana Baggett doubled seating capacity and won over patrons with "home cooked" meals.

"The last year has been incredible," reports Ed Oravetz, Kim's husband. "In what started out as just a few employees has grown to over 18. As Friendswood residents ourselves, we have made a huge commitment to this community and are working hard to create a restaurant Friendswood and surrounding communities will be proud of."

For information, call 281-992-1088.

Take comfort: Here's comforting news to patrons of Gourmet Comfort Foods in Santa Fe. After about a month hiatus, the eatery at 12018 state Highway 6 will reopen

11 a.m. Monday. Owner Karen Sterling and family temporarily closed the eatery to repair flood damage at their house caused by a malfunctioning hot-water heater.

Gourmet Comfort Foods, which offers homestyle meals such as lasagna, daily specials and new items, including crab cakes and shrimp fettucine, also caters. For information, call 409-316-9787.

Party time: Break out the balloons. Rockaway, N.J.-based Party City is planning to open a 12,000-square-foot store in Victory Lakes Town Center, northeast corner of Interstate 45 and FM 646 in League City.

The retailer, which has a store at 1201 W. Bay Area Blvd. in Webster, is the largest specialty party goods chain in the nation with 600 company-owned and franchise stores in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Party City sells party supplies for nearly every occasion. Heather Nguyen, of NewQuest Properties, which developed Victory Lakes Town Center, represented NewQuest in the lease transaction. Jason Baker, of Baker Katz, represented Party City.
