

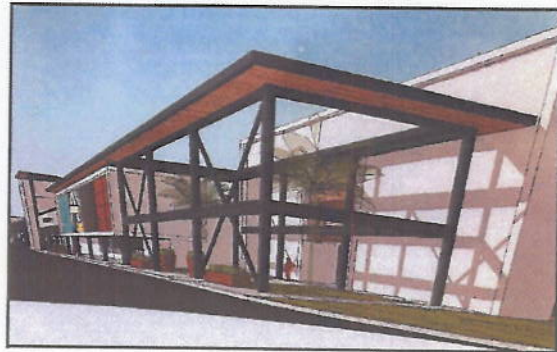


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College Park Shopping Center to Open 2 Blocks Away

by Alan Abel



A couple weeks ago, my next door neighbor George Batts showed me a copy of an article he had just received from Kathy Gerding referencing a new real estate development which will be of interest to all of us living at RTSC. I gleaned the article, then went directly to my computer to read and copy it in its entirety. I had to learn more about this exciting news.

The Jacksonville Daily Record informed that the former Town & Country Shopping Center, renamed College Park, two blocks away, is currently undergoing a multi-million-dollar renovation as the 182,000-square-foot complex was purchased by JWB Real Estate Capital in August 2019 for \$5.03 million.



Interestingly, Jacksonville University, several blocks away, is giving input and is involved in the project. JU will have a presence at the center and officials are pleased that the 69-year old shopping center has been renamed College Park.

In a News Release, Alex Sifakis, President, JWB Real Estate Capital, said of his company's investment, "The College Park property is the gateway to Arlington and a crucial lynchpin in creating a positive impression for the neighborhood." Sifakis added that a critical element for JWB is to lease space responsibly, to attract "not only good tenants, but also good neighbors. We are trying to do what is in the best interest of the Arlington neighborhood in the long-term, not simply fill spaces for profit's sake." Sifakis also said his company is bringing infrastructure and amenities to the Arlington area.



The nearly 19-acre shopping center is undergoing a revitalization. In June 2021, the Renew Arlington Community Redevelopment Agency granted an almost \$1.31 million code compliance grant to JWB and a \$2 million infrastructure development grant for improvements to the shopping center. The agency offers assistance to help owners meet new commercial property design standards to combat blight in Arlington.

Complete upgrades will approximate \$4.5 million to the property and up to \$7 million for a 2.2-acre outparcel. Total combined costs for the completion of the project is estimated to approach \$25 million.

In 2020 we saw the completion of "The Wall at College Park," a mural at the south end near Arlington Expressway and part of the shopping complex. The mural features unique panels from eight local artists and the wall spells out "ARLINGTON."

Redevelopment currently underway include a facade redesign, mixed-use outparcel space, signage overhauls, upgraded LED lighting systems, parking lot and landscaping improvements.

Architects and local contractors are now redefining the rooflines and will be adding various new exterior structural finishes and new roofing. Further enhancement includes adding contemporary colors which will bring the plaza up to modern standards. This all is part of the \$4.5 million renovation of the exterior. It is expected that this phase will be completed in several months. ShayCore, LLC is the contractor.

My twin brother Eric Abel and I recently ventured over to College Park to check on their progress for ourselves. We walked around and Eric clicked away. As we peeped into a window of one of the empty storefronts, we were fortunate in that we saw a man staring back at us from within his makeshift office. We walked in and met Dan Manjack, the Superintendent of the construction taking place and with ShayCore. Dan talked about the project and invited us to take a look at several architectural renderings of the project which were lined up on easels.

Currently the shopping center is almost 50% occupied with its main stores including Dollar General, Advance Auto Parts, DaVita Kidney Care, and Legacy Ministries Worship Center.