

Wagner's demolition due in October

By Shaun Zinck szinck@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Saturday, August 18, 2012 10:00 am

Time is running out for the old Wagner's building in downtown Beloit.

The old building, and two adjacent structures, are expected to be torn down sometime in October, said Rob Gerbitz, president and COO of Hendricks Development Group.

Gerbitz said the company is testing the soil around the building, located at 422, 430 and 432 E. Grand Ave., and civil engineers have been out to inspect the location.

"It's going to be a really fun project. I'm looking forward to it," he said.

The company hasn't finalized the purchase of the surrounding buildings, located at 416 and 418 E. Grand Ave., but expect to close soon, Gerbitz said.

The company expects the project to take about a year, which includes construction and leasing out the first floor for commercial business.

Gerbitz declined to say how much the construction would cost, but Beloit Daily News archives said previous estimates put the total development cost at about \$7.39 million.

The top two floors will be residential housing apartments. Gerbitz said Beloit College officials have discussed students living in the apartments, but nothing has been finalized.

He said they haven't discussed having a mix of students and residents in the apartments, but didn't rule it out.

"Right now we are looking at one or the other," he said.

The college previously told the Daily News that its board of trustees was expected to take up the issue in the spring. The next board meeting will be in October, but they are not expected to hear anything on the Wagner's site at that time.

The city changed its overnight parking ordinance in July to allow residents in the downtown area to purchase long term parking permits. The ordinance would allow potential Beloit College students, who might be living at the site of the former Wagner's building, to park in city lots without time limits.

The Wagner's building previously held Wagner's Office Supply, which closed its doors 2001. The building stood vacant for more than a decade until Hendricks bought it in December 2011.