

Demolition a possibility for Hotel Marion

BY Spencer Durham - sdurham@chronicle-tribune.com | Posted: Thursday, July 6, 2017 6:00 am

The future of the Hotel Marion building is up in the air as the Marion Housing Authority is considering tearing down the structure.

The housing organization, which purchased the property at 501 E. Fourth St. last year, is currently weighing two options: demolition or rehabilitating the current structure. Riley Tangeman, assistant development coordinator for Marion Housing Authority, said the decision will be determined by cost.

“We are currently looking at what’s going to be more cost-effective,” she said. “Whether that’s demolishing the building or rehabilitating and gutting out all the dry wall inside. It will offer us more flexibility if we tear it down but it may be more cost effective to gut out the drywall.”

Steven M. Sapp, executive officer of the Marion Housing Authority, is leaning towards demolition.

“Both will be expensive,” he said. “If it’s close, I’d pick demolition. I would still be inclined to go with demolition even if it costs a little more.”

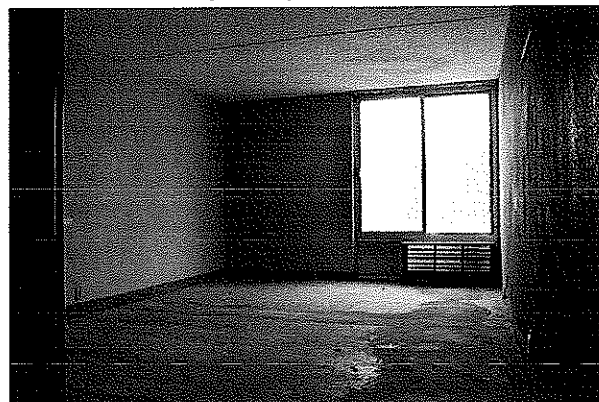
Flexibility in building their housing unit is what makes the demolition an attractive choice, according to Sapp. The Marion Housing Authority is currently talking with demolition bidders on cost. Sapp said they should know in “a month or so” whether or not they will demolish the building.

Originally intended as a mixed income housing unit, Sapp said this has changed and the Hotel Marion property will now be a market rate apartment unit instead.

“The good thing is that there will be no income stipulation,” he said. “There is a need in the community (for market based apartments).”

Sapp added that the new complex will have about 40 units and believes it will be a positive effect on downtown. The executive officer said they expect the project to cost between seven million and twelve million dollars. Marion Housing Authority purchased Hotel Marion for about \$140,000 and according to Sapp, expenditures are still under \$185,000.

The project has hit some snags regarding funding. Sapp said the tax credit market took a hit and put construction behind.



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FUTURE TBD: One of the cleaned out rooms in the former Hotel Marion. Whether or not the building will be renovated or torn down remains to be seen.

“We had hoped to be under construction already,” he said. “It has made us reevaluate what we are doing.”

Sapp said they won't know more about funding until February, but aims to start construction in 2018 and have the project completed the following year.

The restaurant aspect of the building will continue but whether that's in the existing structure or a brand new one remains to be seen.

“There will be some sort of restaurant facility,” said Sapp, who is considering either a full service restaurant or one that just offers breakfast and lunch.

Other ideas being kicked around include a coffee shop, daycare center and fresh market. Sapp said he wants the property to be one the whole community can enjoy, not just those who will call it home.

The future of the building will become clearer once a decision is made, but the Marion Housing Authority has cleaned out the former Hotel Marion of much its trash, debris and appliances. The current state of the building is a world's difference than what it was when it was purchased by the housing organization, according to Trixi Morin, executive assistant of the Marion Housing Authority.

“You had to be careful walking through so you didn't step on something,” she said. “It was full of junk. There's definitely a difference.”

Tangeman said the goal is to make the building presentable while its future is determined and create some positive momentum in Marion.

“We want the community to know something is being done,” she said. “We really just want to see some movement in the community that will start a ripple effect. I think the community needs to believe in it's ability to restart. I think this can be one of those steps towards revitalizing the community's self-esteem.”