Private developer planning bayfront housing for Stockton students in AC

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ATLANTIC CITY — A coveted piece of bayfront property may soon be the site of an off-campus housing complex for Stockton University students, as developers are working on a plan to bring more than 100 beds to North Trenton Avenue.

“We’re solving a need here for off-campus housing. Every university has it,” said Donald E. Haviland Jr., Light House Properties president and CEO.

Haviland and General Manager Ron G. Ruffner Jr. unveiled plans Monday for private student housing at the site just west of the Gateway Project, which includes Stockton’s new Atlantic City campus expected to open next fall.

“From where we’re standing today, you can see the future of Atlantic City,” Haviland said.

Haviland said Light House Properties is in the contract phase of development, which includes acquiring the properties at 106, 108 and 110 N. Trenton Ave. While the corner lot is vacant, the adjacent properties contain an occupied residential building and the foundation of another.

Called “The Point,” the four-story structure off Sunset Avenue and adjacent to the Wonder Bar would offer waterfront views on two sides and a head-on view of the Gateway Project. The first floor would be a lobby area with residential units on the second through fourth floors. Most of the apartments will be one-bedroom units between 350 and 400 square feet, Haviland said. There will be some two-bedroom units available. Haviland did not say what the lease rate of the units would be.

“I think we’ll be competitively priced,” he said.

The developers are planning an eco-friendly building with a green roof and waterfront amenities for tenants, including launches for kayaking and paddle boards. The rooms will be furnished and there will be security guards and surveillance, Haviland said. He said they expect to offer 12-month leases.

“We want these students who come to Atlantic City to stay in Atlantic City,” Haviland said.

Haviland said Light House Properties has been communicating with Stockton and has received its support for the project “from the beginning.” He said the company will work with Stockton to make sure students know about off-campus housing options.

“We want to help frame the campus,” he said.

Stockton University Director of News and Media Relations Diane D’Amico said Stockton supports off-campus housing development.
“Promoting new and diversified economic development in Atlantic City has always been a goal of the Gateway Project. As we move forward with plans to open Stockton’s Atlantic City campus in fall 2018, we welcome private development in the surrounding neighborhood,” D’Amico said.

The developers said they want to take advantage of the five-year tax abatement plan offered by the city, but Haviland said he is also interested in a 10-year tax abatement if possible.

As far as the 100 cars that may come with the students, Ruffner said they are working with the city to develop an off-street parking plan that will include the lot across the street, as well as additional lots off site, but in close proximity. Currently, the narrow streets that surround the property offer some on-street parking that is mostly used by residents in the area.

According to New Jersey business records, Light House Properties is a limited liability company that formed earlier this year. It is a subsidiary of parent company Teach Solais, based out of Trenton and Philadelphia, Ruffner said. Atlantic County property records show the parent company has been acquiring properties throughout Atlantic City for the past two years.

Ruffner said Light House Properties will build, develop and manage properties in Atlantic City, with plans to develop additional housing projects.

Ruffner said Light House Properties is opening up a headquarters here, at 2715 Arctic Ave., sometime early next year. Haviland said the company will employ a dozen people and plans to consider Atlantic City residents first.

The development has not yet made it through the permitting process, which Haviland said will at least require a Coastal Area Facilities Review Act permit from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. He expects that process to take at least six months.

The developers are hoping to have the building complete by January 2019, Haviland said. He said they have not been before the Planning Board yet for approval.