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Gas Worx breaks ground with a nod to Ybor history

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Business and civic leaders on Monday gathered on a surface parking lot in downtown Tampa's no man's land to celebrate the groundbreaking of the \$500 million mixed-use Gas Worx.

Gas Worx will rise on this desolate swath of urban land between the Channel district and Ybor City, connecting the two neighborhoods with new apartments, office space, retail, restaurants and public parks. Darryl Shaw, the cofounder of BluePearl Veterinary Partners, spent years assembling the land that will be Gas Worx. He's partnered with Washington, D.C.-based Kettler on the development.

The district will span 5.9 million square feet across 34 acres — generally north of Adamo Drive, west of North 15th Street, South of East Fifth Avenue and east of East Scott Street. A 317-unit apartment building with 2,500 square feet of retail space is under construction; the next phase of construction will build 800 apartments in four buildings and revitalize a historic warehouse with office, retail and restaurant space.

Mayor Jane Castor, who is unopposed in Tuesday's municipal election, praised the developers for their sense of urgency and their respect for Ybor City's history. The groundbreaking ceremony included hand-rolled cigars from J.C. Newman Cigar Co., an Ybor anchor for over a century.



KETTLER

Castor said Shaw is "part of the fabric of Ybor." He first invested in the historic district as a college grad; though that venture ended in the building's collapse, Shaw's fascination with the neighborhood never waned, and he's become entrenched in Ybor, building relationships that have paved the way for his real estate acquisitions over the years.

"This isn't just a development," Castor said. "This is going to be [a continuance] of Ybor's history. This is going to be a neighborhood where people can raise families and get jobs where they can realize their dreams."

Monday's groundbreaking has been years in the making for Shaw, who called Gas Worx a "long-term vision."

"It's just nice to see it get going," Shaw said. "For me, Gas Worx is wonderful, but it's really about Ybor City and the opportunity to bring people to live in Ybor."



Ashley Gurbal Kritzer

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