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Firm revives stalled Morse condo project

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NOBLESVILLE -- Flaherty & Collins has taken over a stalled condo project on Morse Reservoir and plans to begin closing on homes after year's end.

Harbour Town Condominiums is being born of Harbour Town Apartments, which is about 30 years old. It's on the northern shore of Morse Reservoir by North Harbour. While several apartment buildings were torn down to make way for the first condo, which towers over the reservoir, more apartment buildings with 103 rental units still exist.

Kathy Desautels, director of development services for Flaherty & Collins, a developer of multifamily properties that deals in construction and property management, said all the apartments eventually will be torn down for condos, but plans aren't specific yet. Desautels says the priority now is marketing and selling the first building, and it's premature to talk about future plans.

"We're looking to have a grand opening event after the first of the year," she said. "We have a marketing campaign ready to launch."

Built with an open atmosphere in the main living area, square footage ranges from 918 for one-bedroom units to 1,418 for two-bedroom units. Prices are in the \$200,000s to \$300,000s.

Flaherty & Collins has been working with Noblesville officials for about three months, and received an OK for a plat this week, meaning the company can close sales of condos. The building has four floors and 45 units. It has eight inches of concrete between units and 12 inches between floors, and was built "green" -- the precast concrete building is energy efficient.

Flaherty & Collins wasn't in charge when the building broke ground early last year. The company was hired this year by House Investments Capital Market VII, an affiliate of House Investments, which is an "Indianapolis-based sponsor of real-estate investments for institutions and individuals, and provider of equity capital for real-estate developers," according to its Web site.

John Kretchmar, a Chicago-based developer doing business as Harbour Town Ventures II, owns Harbour Town Condominiums, but House Investments Capital Market VII has managing control of the limited liability company and has placed Flaherty & Collins in charge, said D. Bryan Weese, Harbour Town Ventures II's lawyer.

When the property was purchased in 2005, Kretchmar expected to have the first three buildings done by 2010 with three more to come, but said the timeline was scaled back due to the slow

housing market. He said plans still include five 53-unit buildings with two- and three-bedroom condos. The apartment buildings will be torn down as that work progresses in phases, but there's no firm timeline except "as the market dictates," Kretchmar said. The total build-out, including the first building, would put the project at \$93 million, he said.

While Kretchmar has been in contact with Flaherty & Collins, Desautels could not confirm his plans, although she said new buildings probably wouldn't look the same as the finished building. Despite the slow market, Kretchmar said demand is still there for condos. "Noblesville is one of the fastest growing cities in Hamilton County and the Indianapolis area," he said. "Of course, the location on the reservoir is very attractive."