



Developer sets meeting on CottonMill project

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By PAUL SIMS  
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Developers of the CottonMill Marketplace will hold a town hall meeting later this month to supply the community with details on the project, a company official said Wednesday.

The town hall meeting will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. March 24 at the Hilton Garden Inn

Developers and other development team members "will present the project, discuss its challenges and answer questions from the audience," said Wendy Barthe Peavy, marketing and public policy director for Comvest Properties in an e-mail Wednesday.

Plans for the development call for the project to provide 957,600 square feet for retail, restaurant, office, hotel and conference center space on the 25 acres of land bordered to the west by Spring Street, to the north by Russell Street and to the east and south by Highway 12. A key aspect of the project will be the E.E. Cooley Building, which will be renovated into a conference center tied to a Courtyard by Marriott Hotel.

The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning approved the sale in October of a total of 11.87 acres, including the property where the building is located, along with the site of Mississippi State University's Writing and Thinking program, at a sales price of \$6.03 million.

University officials have granted a contract extension as officials finalize financing details on the project, Peavy said Wednesday. The current extension expires April 1, she said.

Environmental assessments on property are finished no environmental issues are reported, Peavy said, noting that structural assessments were not complete as of Wednesday. Project officials have not yet set a formal groundbreaking date, Peavy said. Construction will not start until after a planned unit development drawings are submitted, which will happen when the remaining aspects of financing are in place, she said, noting that officials are working toward submitting a proposal for the PUD in May.