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For Immediate Release

Town of Berlin Announces Sale of Parcel 57 at Heron Park

\$1.2 million sale of former processing building advances Heron Park redevelopment

BERLIN, Md. — The Town of Berlin has closed on the sale of Parcel 57 at Heron Park for \$1.2 million. Palmer and Sandy Gillis, through Heron Park Development, LLC, purchased the property, which includes the former chicken processing building. The sale marks a major milestone in the Town's long-term effort to reactivate the former Tyson Foods site, which the Town acquired in February 2016 for \$2.5 million.

The Gillis' plan is to develop the property in two phases. The first phase will include a professional office building in the middle of the site and a retail building, likely a restaurant, fronting Ocean City Boulevard. The Gillis' have not presented a specific plan for the second phase, which will be constructed in the rear of the site, closer to the ponds. However, the Gillis' have committed to landscaping and enhancing features in the rear of the site until the second phase is constructed.

In 2021, the Town received \$500,000 from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for strategic demolition of unsafe portions of the former processing plant. The Town used the funding to remove structures that could not be repurposed, clearing the way for redevelopment. In April 2025, the Town entered into a contract with the Gillis' to purchase and redevelop the site. The Mayor and Council worked closely with the Gillis' to ensure the contract included benchmarks for construction and activation of the property, including a requirement to begin construction of the first phase by the end of April 2027 and complete it by the end of October 2028. The developer has posted \$50,000 in security that the Town may draw on at \$5,000 per month if those deadlines are missed. These requirements will help return the property to productive use and restore the parcel to the Town's tax rolls.

"For years, residents have asked what's next for the former chicken plant site. With Palmer and Sandy Gillis on board, we finally have a clear answer. The Town looks forward to working alongside them to see the former chicken plant site become a place our community can be proud of," said Mayor Zack Tyndall. The Mayor also noted that "residents and businesses along Old Ocean City Boulevard have been doing their part to improve and reinvest in their neighborhood, and we are pleased to see the Gillis' adding the former processing plant building to that progress."

Mayor Tyndall also thanked those who helped the project reach this point. "I want to thank the citizens of Berlin, Councilmembers, Planning Commission members, our other local partners, and the State of Maryland for their continued support throughout this redevelopment process," he said. "I also want to extend a special thank you to Emily K. Morris of EKM Law, PLLC, for her leadership and guidance as we navigated the complexities of redeveloping this property."

The Town continues to own roughly 85 percent of the land acquired in 2016, including the walking path around the lagoons. The Mayor, Council, and community continue to plan and fund a new skate park and Public Works facility on Town-owned portions of Heron Park.

Residents should also note that the entrance to Heron Park has been shifted slightly to the east. Signage will mark the new route, and the Mayor and Council will continue working toward a permanent roadway that will serve Heron Park, the planned skate park, and the new Public Works facility.

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