

BARNES BUILDING SURVIVES STORM, SELLS FOR \$85K

By ANDY OURIEL, Sandusky Register January 24, 2019



Register photo/ANDY OURIEL
Renaissance Too, a Sandusky-based development company, recently acquired the Barnes Building, right on East Water Street in downtown, located across from Daly's Pub. The company also owns the adjacent Biemiller Building, left.

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A development company now owns two of the three downtown Sandusky buildings badly damaged in a severe summer storm this past year. Sandusky-based Renaissance Too

recently acquired the Barnes Building on East Water Street. It's located across from Daly's Pub and situated right next to the Biemiller Building, another property Renaissance Too owns. Erie County auditor records show Renaissance Too recently purchased the property from Scott and Heather Barnes for about \$85,000. "It made sense, to us, to have two buildings adjacent to each other, which should allow us to share some amenities between them," said company partner Bob Hare.

His team continues to assess potential development opportunities there. "As to the amount of investment, we are in the process of figuring that out. The first step is to clean out the damage to the building from July." Cleanup efforts should span through winter and spring. In July, straight-line winds topping out at 60 mph mangled three adjacent structures: the Biemiller, Barnes and Reber buildings. Despite roofs, siding and other brick materials fiercely falling from a trio of three story-tall structures, which wrecked cars and made these buildings inhabitable, nobody sustained any injuries or died. Only a financial company, Barnes Tax Service, occupied the building prior to this summer's storm. "They moved to another building downtown after the storm," Hare said. "There were no occupants of the second or third floors."

Progress report: Biemiller Building

Renaissance also keeps plugging along to repair the Biemiller Building. It's the East Water Street structure located beside the Barnes Building and closest to Landmark Kitchen & Bar. Most notably, crews filled in a gaping hole on the building's side and are still working on shoring up its entire foundation. "The Biemiller is back 'in the dry' with the roof membrane in place and only the gutters to be installed," Hare said. "We are also finalizing plans for the building improvements."

In early 2018, months before the storm came, Renaissance came to terms with Lake Erie Shores & Islands to relocate its tourism bureau there. It's not known when a move could take place. The bureau "continues to plan on occupying the first two floors

of the Biemiller Building once completed,” Hare said. Renaissance even received about \$184,000 in state tax credits to help offset an estimated \$1 million historic building renovation project, which also consists of constructing two upper-level apartments atop this three story structure.

Many people, including one city leader in particular, want to see Renaissance’s efforts fulfilled, even if it comes months after originally anticipated because of the devastating storm. “Bob and his team have been transforming Water Street one building at a time,” city manager Eric Wobser said. “It’s exciting to know the Barnes Building is in good hands. I look forward to seeing their plans for these important properties.”