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Proposed medical facility on Swanson Avenue could be reality within 2 years

Property on Swanson Ave. eyed for Micro-Hospital

By Michael Zogg

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Dr. Jack Dunn (left) and his son JP Dunn stand by a sign along Swanson Avenue marking the site of a proposed micro-hospital.

Michael Zogg / Today's News-Herald

Plans for a new medical facility in Lake Havasu City have been tossed around by local physicians for some time, but the idea recently started gaining momentum and may

become a reality within two years.

Dr. Jack Dunn, a local radiologist who runs Wide Open MRI in Havasu as well as a private practice in Parker, bought property on Swanson Avenue just up the hill from The Views about six months ago with plans to build a brand new micro-hospital to serve the community. Since then he says he has been in talks with healthcare providers to determine what services they would be able to provide, as well as studying the local healthcare market to identify areas of need.

Currently, Dunn said the micro-hospital is expecting to offer general practice as well as vascular surgery, orthopedic surgery, neurosurgery, cardiac services and an imaging center.

“Myself and some other physicians in town have been talking about this for a while. We are in the planning stages right now,” Dunn said. “I think for the community it would be nice to have another place for people to come. Typically a micro-hospital will provide similar services, but not all the services of a regional hospital. So we will have surgical services, imaging services, and pretty much everything that the hospital does. We may not have some of the trauma services that Havasu Regional (Medical Center) can do.”

The project is being developed by Desert Land Group. CFO Luke Still said current plans call for a 30,000 square foot facility that would open with nine beds and five surgical areas. He said the operation could expand to as many as 20 beds if needed.

Still said they are currently in the process of finding an operator for the facility who would be responsible for hiring, handling finances, and operations.

“We have a couple different operators we are talking to that our consultant has hooked us up with,” Still said. “We have done all the feasibility analysis already so we have a really good idea of what type of volume and care is needed here. We are trying to fill those voids where we are finding it is taking longer or is needed here.”

Still said they are also in the process of getting Medicare approvals, which will allow them to start finalizing agreements.

“Right now we have conceptual documents that we used to put together budgets, costs, and development type of things,” Still said. “The next step is to actually go out and make those hard numbers with contracts, get the final engineering stuff, and submit it to the city.”

If everything goes smoothly, Still said plans could be submitted to Lake Havasu City for approval in three months. He said it takes another two to three months for plans to go through city staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission before reaching the City Council for a final decision.

Once all of those hurdles are cleared, Still said construction is expected to take about 12 months to complete.

Still said a second healthcare facility in the area could help to improve the quality and cost of care received in the community.

“We are here to try to create an innovative way to provide healthcare that helps reduce cost from an admin perspective,” Still said. “We don’t have 53 different hospitals in our chain, this is organic and homegrown so we think we can operate at a lower cost. If we can operate at a lower cost we can provide services at a lower cost.”

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Reporter