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Bleachery Site Improvement Should Top City-Winthrop College Town Action Plan

Winthrop University

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Bleachery Site Improvement Should Top City-Winthrop College Town Action Plan

Quick Facts

- Officials hope for stepped-up improvements on the long-sought “college town” atmosphere surrounding the Winthrop campus.
- The city of Rock Hill and Winthrop will share the costs of developing an action plan.

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Winthrop and the City of Rock Hill have launched an initiative to design an action plan that officials hope will lead to stepped-up improvements on the long-sought “college town” atmosphere surrounding the Winthrop campus, **President Anthony DiGiorgio** told faculty and staff today.

At the top of the list where improvements are needed, according to **DiGiorgio**, is the Bleachery site, where two fires over the summer caused adjacent neighborhoods to be evacuated and left the deteriorating million-square-foot facility adjacent to Winthrop’s campus even more of an eyesore than it has been for some years. Two young men subsequently were arrested and charged in connection with the fires.

As recently as two years ago, the site had been targeted for a mixed-use redevelopment, including an active retiree community, to be underwritten by the City of Rock Hill and private sector site owners, with Winthrop asked to provide a “lifelong learning institute” that would attract potential residents to the development.

“The economic downturn obviously has made re-development unlikely for the very near future,” **DiGiorgio** reported Wednesday during his annual address opening Winthrop’s academic year.

Since then, Winthrop and Rock Hill city officials have turned their attention to the “360-degree area” around the campus, and recently issued a joint “request for qualifications” for a firm to head up development of such an action plan.

“We know our neighbors who were displaced by the Bleachery fires are very concerned, and Winthrop’s campus community is as well. We are told by both city officials and owners of the property that every effort has been made to advance their joint work on redeveloping this site, but we’ve seen no progress at all. So it was clear Winthrop needed to become more active on both the Bleachery and Cherry Road improvement matters,” **DiGiorgio** said, adding that “Mayor Echols agreed with our concerns, and offered the ‘360-degree’ approach.”

“Improvement in the situation obviously will be a major goal for any **College Town Action Plan** that emerges from work with the City, from both neighborhood and Winthrop perspectives,” **DiGiorgio** said during his address.

The city and Winthrop will share the costs of developing the action plan, and involve the public in the process. The total cost is expected to be approximately \$100,000, with each entity paying half.

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