

# Hull Group receives demolition permit for the former Macy's store

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
October 12 2017 2:43 PM



ALTON - A demolition permit for the former Macy's location at the Alton Square Mall was approved by the city recently.

Alton Building and Zoning Director Greg Caffey said he expects work to begin on the demolition of the 200,000 square feet of former retail space within the next month. Once it begins, he said the process could take anywhere from 60-90 days. Once the building, which ceased retail operations earlier this year, is demolished, Alton Mayor Brant Walker said the current mall ownership, the Georgia-based Hull Group, will work on developing as many as 14 acres of what he described as "premium retail space" facing Homer Adams Parkway.

"When they get that out of the way, it gives them a clean slate of 14 acres facing the Homer Adams Parkway," Walker said. "It is definitely in the interest of that side of the mall."

The demolition permit is valued at \$315,000, and the Hull Group is currently working with its general contractor, South Carolina-based Low Country Unlimited, to sub-contract work to local firms. Caffey said some minor asbestos abatement is also required before demolition is commenced.

Once the building is demolished, Caffey said the former space would be seeded with grass before any retail or restaurants moved into the area.

Other renovations promised in the Hull Group's long-term development released earlier this year are on track still, both Caffey and Walker agreed, but neither could say when those developments were set to start or finish.

That plan would segregate the upper and lower floors of the mall, making the lower floor have traditional retail, while the upper floor would host non-traditional establishments and/or large box stores.

When asked if a movie theater, which was a part of the Hull Group's long-term development plan, was still a part of the mall's future, neither Caffey nor Walker could confirm or set a date, but each agreed the city still desired a movie theater in the future.

Despite the recent closure of Champ's Sports, Walker said he is optimistic about what the Hull Group is doing with the mall. He and Caffey said the closure of Champs was expected, adding that closure - as well as other recent ones - has been the result of corporate-level sales, not the faults of the Alton Square Mall.



"To my knowledge, every store that has closed there has been profitable," Walker said. "That mall is healthy for the stores in there."

After being asked if more stores were closing, Walker and Caffey said all the stores remaining in the mall have either just begun, or are currently in the middle of, long-term leases.

Walker said he is optimistic to see how the Hull Group will handle the future of the Alton Square Mall.

"We have an ownership very experienced in retail, and they are looking to do a plan," he said. "It's kind of sad to see some things go, but I'm happy to see it getting refitted and ready to go again instead of closing. It's going to be fun to see that mall come back to life."