

Planning a luxe getaway

GETAWAY

- Oceanside Resort is to have 184 rooms, two pools, a spa and restaurant

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HUTCHINSON ISLAND — A luxury oceanfront hotel is to open by January 2017 on the site of the former Holiday Inn Oceanside, which was destroyed more than a decade ago by hurricanes.

Oceanside Resort, 3793 N.E. Ocean Blvd., is to have 184 rooms, an oceanfront restaurant, two pools, a spa and 8,000 square feet of meeting space, said Mark Walsh, vice president of developer Ocean Properties Ltd.

Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne ripped through the region in 2004 and destroyed the Holiday Inn Oceanside. Since then, all that remains on the site is a dilapidated beige building with a green metal roof.

Ocean Properties says it will open a high-end hotel. It's to have a fourdiamond rating based on AAA's Diamond Rating Process and would attract guests looking for a quiet vacation spot.

It would provide an option to people who want to vacation somewhere other than the popular South Florida destinations, Walsh said. "I think a certain amount of people would like a vacation that's not as crowded. It's a great getaway," he said.

Ocean Properties would manage the hotel and run the restaurant. The developer hasn't settled on what type of restaurant is to open but is considering a mixture of Italian food and seafood, Walsh said.

It hasn't decided whether the new hotel would be a franchise, he added.

Ocean Properties bought the property, which spans both the east and west side of State Road A1A, from The "H" Group in 2009 for \$12 million, according to the Martin County

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Mark Walsh (center), vice president of Oceanside Properties, shares a light moment before the groundbreaking of the forthcoming Oceanside Resort on Hutchinson Island in Jensen Beach on Monday. To see more photos, go to

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PHOTOS BY HOBIE HILER/ SPECIAL TO TREASURE COAST NEWSPAPERS



This rendering depicts the west elevation of the planned Oceanside Resort on Hutchinson Island in Jensen Beach.



1A Appraiser's Office. The "H" Group is controlled by Wayne Huizenga Jr., former owner of the Miami Dolphins.

The part of the property west of A1A is to be developed as parking, Walsh said.

A groundbreaking was held Monday.

Asked why it's taken six years since the property was bought to begin construction, Walsh said Ocean Properties was working to come up with a plan for a luxury hotel that would fit well on the site.

Local hotel industry experts said Oceanside Resort won't hurt existing businesses and, in fact, might help.

"If anything, it's going to actually create more of a destination (here) than we already have, so the impact is going to be a positive one," said Ed Griffith, industry expert.

Griffith is general manager of the Courtyard by Marriott, Hutchinson Island Oceanside, which was also developed by Ocean Properties. That oceanfront hotel is located just over a mile north of the planned Oceanside Resort.

Jacque Lewis, president of the Martin County Hotel & Motel Association and general manager of the Courtyard by Marriott near Interstate 95 in Martin County, said the new resort would fill a void.

“I think the area is needing a new beach-side resort; something that is fresh and new and that would attract that higherend guest to our area,” she said.

Because it would be more of a “mid- to upscale” hotel, it won’t impact existing, older hotels’ business, Lewis added.

“You are comparing an upper, mid-scale property to an economy property. If you are an economy traveler, you are not going to leave that property to go to an upper- to mid -scale property,” Lewis said.

And, she added, “if a guest wants a beach-front property, they are going to go to a beach-front property.”