



## NEWS RELEASE

### **Mike Browning**

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Twitter: @cityofmborotn

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/cityofmurfreesborotn](http://www.facebook.com/cityofmurfreesborotn)

PHONE: 615-848-3245/642-3230 mobile

EMAIL: [mbrowning@murfreesborotn.gov](mailto:mbrowning@murfreesborotn.gov)

Website: [www.murfreesborotn.gov](http://www.murfreesborotn.gov)

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Jan 7, 2016

### **City Council authorizes proposed acquisition of 1.87 acres downtown**

*Franklin Synergy Bank property is site of historic First United Methodist Church building*

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** — The Murfreesboro City Council voted Thursday to authorize the acquisition of a block of property on the corner of East College and Church Street owned by Franklin Synergy Bank for \$1.55 million. The property is the site of the former First United Methodist Church with an iconic bell tower.

“We think there is tremendous potential for the City to influence the proper development of this property for a mixed use project,” said City Manager Rob Lyons. “The City is uniquely positioned because it owns a 0.62 acre, 60-space parking lot, adjacent to the bank property and could add that significant piece to attract a potential developer.”

Franklin Synergy is building a new office in the Gateway District on Medical Center Parkway but has interest in leasing space in the former church building after finalizing sale of the property. The new bank facility is expected to be completed by late 2016.

Both bank and City leaders have expressed an interest in preserving the brick structure as part of Murfreesboro’s historic downtown. The former First United Methodist Church building dates back to 1888 and served the congregation until 2003. However, the sanctuary is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places nor is it located in the City’s historic district. Leaders would like to see the bell tower preserved as part of the historic downtown landscape.

“There are no regulations, ordinances or programs that would prevent the demolition of the building or mandate a special approval process,” said Lyons. “As it now stands, without City involvement, redevelopment of the site would likely involve demolition of all the bank’s buildings.”

**-(MORE)-**

Under City ownership, administrators and elected officials would have greater input into what develops on the important downtown block as Lytle Street is reconfigured into a new roundabout with pedestrian and parking improvements.

Consultants advising City leaders on the *Murfreesboro 2035* comprehensive plan have recommended greater investment in the downtown area to leverage its full potential for mixed use, residential and office space, and entertainment. Preserving historic elements of downtown is seen as a lucrative aspect of future redevelopment and maintaining Murfreesboro's character.

The favorable Council vote followed a pre-Council public comment period in which representatives of Main Street Murfreesboro and Rutherford County Historian Greg Tucker spoke in favor of the acquisition. Two citizens, Richard Baines and Jeff Rainwater, raised questions about using public dollars to buy the property.

The City's proposed purchase of the property is based upon an appraisal in 2015. The main building appraised for \$1.05 million and the realty building appraised for \$640,000 for a grand total of \$1.69 million.

*For City News online, visit [www.Murfreesborotn.gov](http://www.Murfreesborotn.gov).*

**Photos attached**

1. *First United Methodist Church building.jpg*

(###)