



Photo by Tavia Stinson
Last month a sign advertising the lease and sale of office space at Premier Park appeared seemingly overnight. The business park has only had one tenant since 2004.

Lot

from page A1

Lane has only had one tenant. The N.C. Department of Transportation made use of the space for a short stint in 2011 before relocating.

A number of residents told *The Chronicle* that when the business park was first built, they assumed something that would benefit the community would be put there. One of those residents is Margretta Key, who has lived on the 2000 block of East 14th Street for more than 30 years. She said a few years ago, talks began to surface of a restaurant moving into one of the vacant buildings, but those talks quietly went away.

"It's really disheartening to see the space go to waste," she continued, "especially when this neighborhood is lacking in so many areas."

Lauren Johnson said that she is not surprised that no one has felt the need to invest in the business park or the East Winston community. She said, "For some reason, people just don't feel the need to invest in our community. This is nothing new."

According to business owners, one issue with acquiring space in Premier Park in the past was the price. In 2012, the property was listed for \$1,100,000, which is equivalent to \$220 per square foot.

During that time, the lot was owned by First Mount Vernon Industrial Association (FMVIA), a mortgage broker company based in Alexandria, Virginia. Court records show the company, which was founded in 1994, has been on the wrong end of a number of accusations, including fraud and exclusion of evidence.

Attempts to contact FMVIA were unsuccessful.

Looking toward the future

Although all three buildings remain empty today, that all could be changing in coming

months. In recent weeks, a new sign advertising the property for sale and lease appeared next to the vacant buildings.

It is believed that a drop in the asking price has

future in depth, Ruffin noted that the property is a hidden gem that has all the makings to improve the East Winston community.

"Clearly this property

"It all sounds good, but until I see something move into the buildings, I don't believe it."

—Lauren Johnson

led to more local business owners looking into acquiring space in the business park. Last February, the price of the property was \$485,000; another price drop in September put the property at \$425,000. The fact that the property is in a Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) may be part of the growth in interest as well.

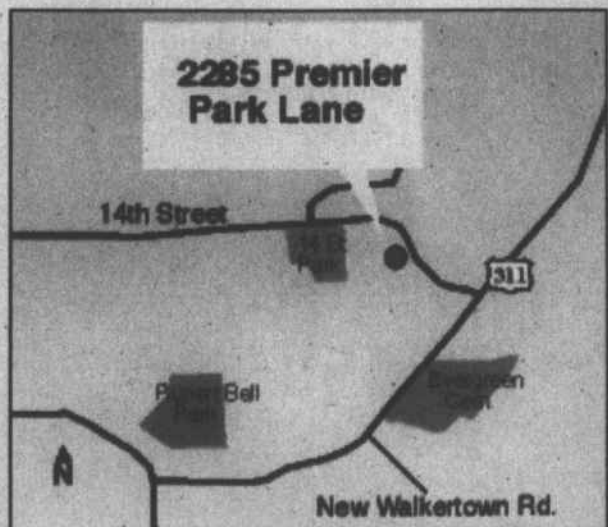
HUBZone was enacted into law as part of the Small Business Reauthorization Act of 1997. The program is an effort by both the U.S. Small Business Administration and Congress to promote economic development and employment growth in distressed areas, by providing access to more federal contracting opportunities.

According to the Meridian Realty Group, a local commercial real estate brokerage company, they have received a number of calls and emails from people in the community interested in the property.

John Ruffin, a certified commercial investment member (CCIM) at Meridian, noted that because the property is currently under contract, his company is unable now to discuss any of the deals that have been presented.

"Given its current status, I am not able to comment until the first of June," Ruffin said.

Without discussing the



Chronicle map

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The North Carolina Black Repertory Company receives operational funding from The Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County. This project was supported by the N.C. Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources.

YOUTH CHARACTER FOOTBALL LEAGUE
YCFL is an Outreach Ministry of Union Baptist Church • Bishop Sir Walter Mack, Jr., Pastor and Founder

Early Registration
May 1 - June 18
\$75

Starting June 19
Registration
\$125

Registration
May 1 - July 25, 2016
Boys and Girls
Ages 5 - 12

Preseason drills once per week will begin June 5 at W-S Prep, 6-8 pm

Contact Information
Thomas Brown, YCFL Director
(336) 423-9510 • ditom51@gmail.com
Pick-up Applications at Union Baptist Church

On-site Sign-ups for Football and Cheerleading:
Saturday, May 14, 2016 (10 am - 2 pm)
14th Street Community Center
2020 E. 14th Street, Winston-Salem
Saturday, May 28, 2016 (10 am - 2 pm)
Union Baptist Church
1200 N. Trade Street, Winston-Salem
Saturday, June 18, 2016 (11 am - 3 pm)
Biotech Place (5th and Patterson Street)
575 N. Patterson Ave., Winston-Salem

Items needed for Registration:
Current Physical, NC ID (from DMV \$10)
Official Birth Certificate with Seal

YCFL Football Camp — June 11, 2016
YCFL will host a one day Football Camp with instruction by the Winston-Salem Wildcats Indoor Area Football Team @ W-S Preparatory Academy
1215 N. Cameron Ave., Winston-Salem, NC
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