

WEST SIDE NEWS

MARCH 6, 2008



Your Money, Your Business

By Tom Snyder

Here's why locally owned banks are vital to our community

A civic leader sees a need in Nashville and decides to do something about it. He tells a local banker about his plans and the banker shares the leader's passion for the project. Within just a few days, having met with bank senior officials (who are his peers, not his superiors, and who are down the hall, not across the country), the Nashville banker completes an approved financing plan for the multi-million project.

That's how things work at Nashville Bank & Trust. Today, with many of Nashville's banks, large and small, owned by out-of-town corporations, it is unlikely that members of many bank boards have ever visited Nashville, much less understand why a particular project is important to the community... or who community leaders are... or why their ideas are worthy of consideration. And nothing gets done in just a few days. Thirty days is more like it.

This is not just a banking issue. It is a community issue. Fortunately, things are changing. Nashville Bank & Trust was formed by experienced bankers with a passion to fill the void left

when the city's large banks were acquired. Because of this, scenarios like the above are no longer historic curiosities.

Here's a real life, recent example from Nashville Bank & Trust: Community leader Mike Shmerling, whose father Abe died from Alzheimer's, saw a need for a new Alzheimer's facility in town - one that would create a higher standard of care, and importantly, allow "aging in place" as the disease progresses. He found an opportunity to fulfill this need that would also rescue residents of a senior living facility from a dramatic increase in rents, or possible eviction. The solution was to purchase Park Manor, a church-owned apartment building for seniors that was put up for sale last year. Park Manor is a 128-unit apartment building located on almost eight acres off Woodmont Boulevard, tucked back behind the Nashville Bank & Trust office building in Belle Meade.

Due to the acreage and prime location, the church organization received offers from many interested buyers; however, most of them were developers who likely

would have razed the Park Manor, forcing the senior citizen residents to find new places to live. Shmerling had a better idea: marry his dream of developing a new Alzheimer's facility with a preservation/renovation of the Park Manor apartments. Shmerling teamed up with Blakeford Management Services, Inc. (managers of the Blakeford Assisted Living facility in Green Hills) and formed a new non-profit organization called Abe's Garden. Together, Shmerling and Blakeford put up the down payment money to buy Park Manor. The deal closed on Jan. 15 with Abe's Garden purchasing Park Manor for approximately \$12.6 million, giving the facility a new lease on life and laying the groundwork for construction of a new Alzheimer's and dementia facility on the eight-acre property. And because Mr. Shmerling's non-profit organization does not plan to raise rents beyond annual cost-of-living increases, current residents were saved from a probable large rent increase, or probable eviction had the property been sold to one of the other suitors for the property. Not only are these senior citizens spared both of those undesirable outcomes; best of all, the proceeds from the sale will be used by the church organization to create a foundation that helps local churches and charities throughout Middle Tennessee. It's a multi-faceted win for our community.

And it happened, in part, because experienced, local bankers at Nashville Bank & Trust knew the property, knew the people involved and understood the importance of the proj-

ect to the community. In this case, NBT's Senior Credit Officer Bob Napier took the lead. I have yet to meet a better commercial real estate lender in Nashville than Bob Napier - he knows our market inside-out and knows how to craft a complex commercial real estate financing package. After hearing about this project, Bob quickly pulled together a team here at the bank, including my fellow bankers Don Shriver and Seth Cole, and in just a few days Nashville Bank & Trust put together the financing to fund the project. This is a task that normally takes out-of-market banks 30 days or more to complete - during which time opportunities can evaporate.

Nashville Bank & Trust's role in this project is the story behind the story. It is a new chapter in the story of how our city became a strong, vibrant community, which required knowledgeable, involved and committed bankers and business leaders who, because they know and trust one another, are able to act quickly and decisively in identifying and meeting community needs. Thanks to the support of local bank like ours, the vision and passion of community leader Mike Shmerling will become a reality...and Abe's Garden will be seeded right here in our backyard. Our bank is very proud to be part of this important project.

Thomas R. Snyder is Managing Director—Private Banking at Nashville Bank & Trust, a full-service bank providing private banking, wealth management and trust services. He can be reached at tom.snyder@nashvillebankandtrust.com or visit www.nashvillebankandtrust.com.

LOANS • CHECKING • PRIVATE BANKING • WEALTH MANAGEMENT • TRUST SERVICES

4525 Harding Road

Suite 300

615-515-1700

www.nashvillebankandtrust.com

Hours: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Mon. - Fri.



NASHVILLE
BANK &
TRUST®

Member FDIC