

Norcross DDA chairman resigns for new project

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NORCROSS - The chairman of Norcross's Downtown Development Authority has resigned to pursue his own development in the city's core.

Skip Nau said he is considering investment and development deals to pursue the city's vision to revitalize Buford Highway. He was approached by Robert Forro, a developer who is working on live-work-play condos near Lillian Webb Community Park.

"In this economic slowdown, most developers we have talked to are on hold now," Nau said. "We're excited about what's going on. ... I didn't want this stuff to sit on the sideline."

Nau was instrumental in the process of creating the park out of the historic ballfield. Officials hope to surround the center with restaurants, condos and shops, pulling the Norcross downtown toward an entrance at Buford Highway. Nau participated in the groundbreaking for the park last month.

"He's really done a tremendous job," Mayor Bucky Johnson said. "I don't know how we are going to replace him."

Nau, who retired in 2005 as executive vice president of development for Waffle House, has served on the authority since 2003, including the past three years as chairman.

"Now, as the economy continues to soften and the real estate market experiences one of its worst downturns in recent history, some of the projects we have been anticipating are in jeopardy," he wrote in his resignation letter, dated June 30. "I was recently approached by a local developer to help manage his project and to help secure additional investors. At this stage in our new development cycle, I feel I can be of most value to the city by working to insure these projects get completed successfully and on time. As I consider these options, I recognize the potential conflict of interest that could result if I were to remain on the DDA Board, thus the reason for my resignation."

Nau said he incorporated two companies to work with contractors to put deals together. New Urban Solutions LLC was organized in February 2007, according to documents filed with the Secretary of State, with New Urban Realty Group organized in late March 2007.

"The good news here is with this slow down around metro Atlanta, there is interest. There's a lot of energy and interest in this area," he said. "I needed to shift gears and get on that side of the fence. ... It's intended to have the local market drive the redevelopment. The difference is because of my experience I will now be able to get things done that I thought were moving too slowly."