

Granary's future put on hold, for now

Developer must decide to buy or decline

By Rachel Carter

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer Loveland City Council members won't let the 115-year-old Loveland Feed and Grain building meet the bulldozer.

So, what happens next?

Gary Hassenflu, the Kansas developer who has an option to buy the property, will decide.

Hassenflu can't tear down the granary, but he could still buy the property at 130 W. Third St. — or walk away from the deal.

His option expires June 1. Until Hassenflu makes a decision, it's sit and wait for owners Dean and Betty Anderson.

"He's got until the first of June to fish or cut bait," Dean Anderson said Wednesday. "As I pointed out from the start, we're still in limbo; we're right in the middle between the savers and (Hassenflu)."

Anderson said Hassenflu didn't say what his plans were after the meeting Tuesday night. But in the past, Hassenflu said that he would not buy the 1-acre site if he could not tear down the 1891 granary, Anderson said.

Hassenflu, president of Garrison Cos. in Prairie Village, Kan., did not return phone calls Wednesday asking for comment about his next steps.

During the City Council meeting, Hassenflu asked council members to consider the Andersons' property rights — and his own, saying "I have an equitable interest in this property."

He told the council and the crowd that the Feed and Grain building wouldn't come down the day he bought the property.

"Let's let the free-market system work," Hassenflu said Tuesday. "If there really are people here who really want to save this, then they can make me an offer."

The crowd — packed with residents who want to save the building — reacted with grumbles, jeers and laughter. Hassenflu responded with, "They act like that's not my intentions, and I'm sorry you feel that way.

"I'd be willing to listen and entertain any offers."

In a phone interview Friday, when asked if he would be willing to negotiate with residents who want to buy and renovate the granary, Hassenflu said:

“They’d have to make an awful good argument for me to sell to them because I see that there’s a great deal of financial benefit to developing new property on it.

“But I’d never rule anything out; I’d consider anything,” he said.

The Andersons just want to sell the property: The couple is obligated to sell to Hassenflu until June 1, when his option expires — but Hassenflu isn’t obligated to buy.

If Hassenflu doesn’t exercise his purchase option, the Andersons aren’t sure what to expect.

Loveland residents Bonnie and Daniel Skaggs and Barry Floyd, a downtown property owner and developer, submitted a backup offer last month to buy the Feed and Grain. The contract offered \$400,000 and a closing date 45 days after June 1.

The Andersons turned down the offer because of Hassenflu’s option.

A group of Loveland residents also are trying to raise money to buy the building. They formed a nonprofit organization, applied for a state historical grant, garnered support from Colorado Preservation Inc., and have raised nearly \$30,000 in pledges from the community.

But the Andersons aren’t convinced.

“We’re not hopeful that will pan out,” Dean said.

Not hopeful, but optimistic.

Despite the fact that the Andersons don’t agree with the City Council’s decision, they’re farmers: Through hail and drought, they know everything eventually will work out.

“We’re optimistic,” Anderson said. “but we’re facing the fact that we’re dealing with politics, and when you’re in politics, they don’t care about the facts. It’s P.Y.A. — protect-your-(backside).”