



## ***News Release***

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### **Factory Merchants Branson to transfer property to city**

The city of Branson is in the process of taking over ownership of Factory Merchants Branson, commonly known as the Red Roof Mall, on Highway 76 behind White Water.

The Board of Aldermen will hold two special meetings before the end of the year to consider the transfer of ownership of Factory Merchants to the city, which would allow the existing tenants to remain for another six months.

The meetings have tentatively been set for December 15 for first reading of the contract and then December 20 for second reading and final passage. Times of the meetings have yet to be determined, but will be posted.

“Contrary to rumors, the city does not nor is it forcing any of the retail businesses in Factory Merchants to move out by the end of the year,” said City Administrator Dean Kruithof. “The fact is, in the transfer contract, the city will be requesting a six month management agreement with Simon Property to work with the current tenants to transition them to other locations like the Shoppes at Branson Meadows, which is also owned by Simon. The city wants to help the businesses stay in Branson.”

The property is located on 32 acres of land owned by the city and leased to Simon Property Group, Inc, who owns and operates the center. It is the oldest factory outlet mall in Branson, with the city entering into a lease agreement in 1986. The current lease agreement with Simon was set to expire in 2021.

Factory Merchants is part of 106 acres owned by the city that was formerly the old Branson Airport. Several other businesses, including White Water, a hotel, theaters and restaurants are also on the city property.

There are 31 existing tenants at Factory Merchants Branson, including retail and some storage. Simon, which also owns The Shoppes at Branson Meadows, plans to assist Factory Merchants Branson tenants if they wish to move to Branson Meadows.

According to Branson City Administrator Dean Kruithof, the lifespan of Factory Merchants Branson has come to an end, and Simon Property Group now wants to focus more attention and resources on The Shoppes at Branson Meadows.

“I want to express gratitude to Simon for its actions, and the long term benefit Factory Merchants Branson has had for our community,” said Kruithof. “Our hope is that the stores in Factory Merchants will find a new home in Branson Meadows.”

As far as what the city plans to do with the Factory Merchants property, Kruithof said all options are open.

“We will have full and complete control of that property, which allows us to look at options for redevelopment,” he said. “Redevelop it to enhance our sports marketing, make it into another Branson attraction, keep it retail – there’s a whole host of possibilities.”

Kruithof said the city could redevelop the mall property itself or partner with a private developer. It’ll be an important item for discussion by the Board of Aldermen, which will have the final say.

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