STET NEWS

Miami group picked for Currie Park

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An indoor-outdoor, two-story restaurant in Currie Park proposed by the Breakwater Hospitality Group got the nod from a selection committee. (Rendering: Breakwater Hospitality Group presentation)

The Miami-based Breakwater Hospitality Group, developers of waterfront restaurants and event spaces in Fort Lauderdale and Miami, has been selected to build an $18.7 million waterfront restaurant in West Palm Beach's Currie Park.

Breakwater is calling its 378-seat restaurant Sea Salt Beach House. It also would provide outdoor seating and a second-floor event ballroom with 328 seats.

Why it matters: Currie Park, long a haven for the homeless about 1.5 miles north of downtown, is undergoing a $37 million renovation. The city sought operators to build and run a restaurant and pay rent to the city.

Breakwater beat competing proposals from Ned Grace, developer of Nora, and his partner, Nick Coniglio, owner of E.R. Bradley's, as well as a third proposal from Hadley Doyle-Gonzalez, whose family ran the Panama Hattie's Rum Bar in Palm Beach Gardens. All five members of the city selection committee favored Breakwater.

What they're saying: "It is a place to come after a morning walk, a youth sporting event, a sunset along the waterfront or simply as a familiar, trusted local destination," Breakwater said in its proposal. "Our philosophy is simple: A good neighborhood starts with good neighbors."

The bottom line: Breakwater proposed a 30-year lease with two 15-year extensions. It would pay $150,000 a year in base rent plus 3% of gross revenues over $10 million. It estimated its payment could amount to $316,440 in the fifth year.

Breakwater's strengths: experience with similar waterfront experiences, including The Wharf along Fort Lauderdale's New River, Pier 5 on Biscayne Bay in Miami's Bayside Marketplace and Regatta Grove along the Miami River; its plan to double the size of the space by adding a second-floor event center; and a team that includes the author of Currie Park's master plan, Chen Moore & Associates.

What's next: Breakwater and the city negotiate a contract that must be approved by the City Commission.

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