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PHOTO BY JIM LINCOLN
Kim Tucker-Gray and John Goodell look over plans.

Hive Project partners close on property, welcome co-working members

By JACKIE KOCH
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The former Boysville property at 8759 Clinton Macon Rd. in Macon Township, once a residential home for boys in trouble, has been idle for the past seven years, but now the 215-acre parcel is positively buzzing with promise after becoming

"The Hive Project" created by Dexter-area visionaries John Goodell and Kim Tucker-Gray. Officially the partners closed on the property May 7, but they have been working on their goals for a campus of art and sustainability for more than 10 years. They first set foot on the Boysville campus in fall 2019 and could see all the possibili-

ties there for their vision, a plan to empower artists, educators, and entrepreneurs of all ages, united by a common desire to share, teach and compassionately serve. The goal is to bring together thousands of people year-round who share a passion for education in the performing,

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This week's online poll:

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Yes No Other

Results from last week's poll:

Are you worried about inflation in the cost of food, fuel and other products?

86% Yes 10% No 3% Other

HIVE FROM 1A

Hive opens co-working space in Macon

visual, creative and culinary arts.

The first step in opening up The Hive to others is a co-working space, which has welcomed five people so far who signed up to share the resources in the building they call "The Swarm" with another five expected to arrive in the next few weeks. The Swarm is approximately 19,000 square feet, with plenty of room for collaborative co-working space for nonprofits, tech startups, and individuals looking for a workspace. With a central reception area, large conference spaces adjoined by a small commercial kitchen, private offices, smaller conference and board

rooms, a mailroom, a separate kitchen and snack room and more, the complex is networked with high-speed internet and there are lockers and showers for those who desire such amenities. The Swarm has room for 40 separate co-working spaces. Monthly memberships for co-worker members range from \$20 for a single day pass to options at \$175 or \$225 monthly for a dedicated desk, working space, and other perks. Goodell said the quality of the high-speed WiFi has been a draw for people looking to get out of their work-at-home situations and have a better online connection. In addition to being available

to co-working members, The Swarm's 3,000-foot conference room is being offered for use by community members looking for a place to hold an event. "We've been contacted with a request by the Kiwanis Club, we'd love to have the Rotary Club," said Tucker-Gray. "It's a space that is large enough even while we're still social distancing, that any of those groups, either Adrian or Tecumseh or Clinton, could meet in there easily." Moving forward, The Hive property will have more improvements, including landscaping around The Swarm building with outdoor patio seating that will allow co-working members to work outside.

"People have literally driven by and stopped to say, 'What's going on here?'" he said. "This is large physical footprint of the community and now it's being taken care of." The partners have been working with individuals, foundations, organizations and corporations over the past year in regard to support of The Hive Project, and those conversations have been ongoing. Goodell said their approach to fundraising is to be in partnership with their supporters, which are often organizations that already have programming that will fit within The Hive's goals. "We are really self-sustainable not just in how we're modeling and building the energy consumption on campus, but in our actual business plan," he said, stating that they will move forward with next steps as soon as each component of The Hive is profitable and able to sustain itself.

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"We're working with some local artists to get some sculptures commissioned for the campus and also some artwork inside," said Goodell. "We're trying to start up a gallery for local artists and also some permanent artwork throughout the building." Closing on the property was a huge milestone, he said, and now that they have the keys they're planning renovations to buildings on the north end of the campus, including the former high school, the dining hall, and the gym. They hope to launch a summer arts program, Honeycomb Academy, in summer of 2022 to bring around 200 children on campus for art instruction. Some local sports programs have shown interest in using The Hive's gym, and Goodell said once that building is upgraded it will be available for use. The activity on campus and the presence of cars in the

An open house is planned for July 31 to show off The Hive Project and offer tours of the campus, in conjunction with an event hosted by Macon Grocery celebrating that store's 80-year anniversary. To recognize the history of The Hive property's connections to American industrialist Henry Ford, a film about Ford's farming efforts on the land will be shown in the event facility during the open house, and other activities and entertainment are being planned. For more information, visit thehiveproject.org or find The Hive Project on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. To schedule a tour, email swarm@thehiveproject.org.