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Biddeford mill housing plan revived

*Submitted By Dieter Bradbury,
 Staff Writer
 Submitted on Thursday, Mar. 5 at 2:00 pm*

BIDDEFORD — A Portland development team has signed an agreement to purchase a building in the Riverdam Mill complex and says it plans to move ahead with a proposal to convert the old textile mill into 66 mixed-income apartments.

Maine Workforce Housing, whose partners include Nathan Szanton and Robert C.S. Monks, expect to complete the purchase of the 80,000-square foot building from Stephen Goodrich in August.

Szanton said in a statement that his group hopes to begin work in August on the \$15 million project, which will provide more than 100 construction jobs. The building will include 40 apartments for low-income residents and 26 units that rent at market rates.

Szanton began working on the project in 2007, when the SpencerMonks development group held an option to purchase Riverdam. But the complex was sold at auction in December, and the high bid of \$500,000 was submitted not by SpencerMonks but by Goodrich.

Goodrich said in a statement he plans to work with the city to redevelop the remainder of the complex.

Biddeford Mayor Joanne Twomey praised Goodrich for his efforts and said she looked forward to completion of Szanton's project.

"I'm very thrilled," Twomey said. "In these economic times, housing is key."

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