

Maury L. Carter & Associates, Inc. is handling the land transaction for the First Team Commercial works to score final site plan permits for its planned 304-unit apartment community.

Property owners in Apopka begin prepping land for new multifamily development

By AMANDA RABINES

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To the north of Medicine Lake, a company linked to managers at First Team Commercial is planning to build a 304-unit apartment community. To the south (starred), property owners are prepping the land to accommodate up to 352 multifamily units. (City of Apopka/Orange County Property Appraiser)

Dual apartment complexes are being planned around Medicine Lake in Apopka.

While Winter Park-based real estate firm **First Team Commercial** works to score final site plan permits for its planned 304-unit apartment community at 2302 Ocoee-Apopka Rd., the property owners just south are beginning to prep their land for a similar development.

According to an application submitted in Apopka, property owners David and Michelle Leon are seeking to change the future land use designation of 17.85 acres to allow for a new apartment complex with entitlements to build up to 352 multifamily units.

Currently, the maximum allowable use on the site would be 211 residential dwelling units. The Leons appointed planning consultant Jim Hall of **Hall Development Services** to change the current land use to High-Density Residential 25 (HDR-25), allowing a developer to build an additional 141 units.

David and Michelle Leon have owned the land for 20 years. The couple purchased the property in 2001 for \$325,000, records show.

The property is located on the west side of Ocoee-Apopka Road and Keene Road intersection, less than a mile away from the AdventHealth Apopka hospital at 2100 Ocoee-Apopka Road.



MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Two separate multifamily developments are being planned in Ocoee and Apopka

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Of the roughly 18 acres, about 14 acres are considered developable, according to application documents.

In a statement submitted to city planners, Hall said a PUD will be proposed after the map amendment and prior to transmittal hearings. Hall confirmed the plans are meant to accommodate future multifamily development but did not respond to questions regarding a future purchaser and developer.

Just north of the site, on 16.5 acres north of Medicine Lake, First Team Commercial plans to build a seven-building, garden-style apartment community. The property owners are related to the family members that founded Herman J. Heidrich & Sons, a prominent fruit and produce business that grew into Florida's largest shipper of fresh fruit in the 1960s.

According to [Preservation Winter Park](#), a blog run by members of an organization of the same name that supports preservation efforts, both properties were originally owned by members of the Gwathmey family, who had been physicians and citrus growers in the area in the late 1930s.

Around 2005 the Leons moved a house, built on the property that the organization strongly suspects was built and designed by architect James Gamble Rogers in 1938. According to the [blog article](#), a developer previously offered to purchase the land surrounding Medicine Lake with plans for multifamily development, but the deal fell through after the 2008 recession.

Other residential developers active in the area include Spring Hill, Tennessee-based [JCF Living](#), which is seeking to build a residential project around 1252 S. Binion Road. The 43-acre property is owned by **Bert E. Roper and Barbara C. Roper Family LLLP** whose managers are family members linked to a former citrus production business in Apopka.

JCF Living has not yet submitted plans, but the company's website says the firm specializes in building "housements," an apparent combination of the words house and apartment.

[D.R. Horton](#) is developing a separate [Build-for-Rent community](#) nearby.

Other active multifamily developers in the area include [Wood Partners](#), which just recently completed building a 285-unit [apartment community](#) at 2423 Areca Palm Dr. called Alta East Shore. Ohio-based [NM Residential](#) has plans to build a 264-unit multifamily community called [Summer House](#), south of Ocoee Apopka Road.



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Amanda covers development and real estate in Orange County. She was born and raised in Miami, where her mother, like thousands of other Cubans, arrived in 1980 during the Mariel Boatlift. It's because of her that Amanda believes in hard work and the power of Cuban coffee. She is a graduate of Florida International University.