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New life for the historic Billie S. Farnum Building as development begins

The Farnum gets a new name as Boji Group begins development and announces Dickinson Wright as anchor tenant

LANSING, MI – The longtime Billie S. Farnum Building in downtown Lansing – vacant since 2016 – gets new life and a new name – “The Louie” – after today’s final state approval to the Boji Group for exciting redevelopment of the towering structure at the corner of Allegan and Capitol avenues. The name is in honor of the developer’s founder and chairman, Louie Boji.

“My father, Louie, came to America as an immigrant and built our business from the ground up. We felt this was a fitting tribute for the patriarch of our family of businesses who has been an active and contributing member of the greater Lansing community and Michigan for decades,” said Ron Boji, Boji Group President and co-founder. “We’re proud to be playing a role in restoring this historic building. With its great location, it will soon be a modern building that helps contribute to a thriving downtown.”

Boji Group also announced the first tenant for the building, prominent national law firm Dickinson Wright. Dickinson Wright will occupy two floors of the building, in their own custom designed office space. The move positions the law firm at the geographic juxtaposition of where the private and public sector meet in the Capitol and helped ensure they were retained downtown.

“As a legislator, I was proud to pass the bill allowing for the sale of the Farnum Building so it would no longer be vacant. Now as Mayor, I am excited to help make it actively used once again. Lansing’s time is now, and the development of this important site will make an excellent addition to a vibrant downtown,” said Mayor Andy Schor.

Boji Group was awarded the opportunity to purchase the building, which has occupied a prime spot in the state’s capital and played a pivotal role in state government for decades, in 2018 through a competitive bid process that was overseen by the Michigan Department of Management, Technology and Budget.

Significant environmental abatement and remediation is required, including asbestos removal, to bring the building in line with public health and safety standards and put it back on the city’s tax rolls. Earlier this summer, the Lansing City Council voted unanimously to approve brownfield credits and today’s decision by the Michigan Strategic Fund was the final step in the approval process. Initial plans call for the building to be move-in ready by September 2020.

“As a member of the Lansing business community for over 45 years, Dickinson Wright is excited to be moving into The Louie. It is a great location in the heart of the city for our firm and we look forward to having our office in this historic building for years to come,” said Michael C. Hammer, CEO of Dickinson Wright.

Earlier this year, Boji Group released renderings of their plans for the 10-floor building and penthouse which will be all new executive office space. With the approval of the credits, construction will start immediately.

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Boji Group is a Michigan-based real estate development, property and construction management firm specializing in private-public-partnerships and providing professional services for more than 20 years.