

Tampa Bay Business Journal - December 1, 2008  
<http://tampabay.bizjournals.com/tampabay/stories/2008/12/01/story6.html>

**TAMPA BAY**  
**Business Journal**

Sponsored by  
**brother**  
 at your side

Friday, November 28, 2008

## Businesses seeking action on arcade

Tampa Bay Business Journal - by [Robert Yaniz Jr.](#), Editorial Assistant

ST. PETERSBURG — The fate of the historic Crislip Arcade, a 1920s-style mall on Central Avenue, has been undetermined for years, and the property has fallen into disarray.

Now some nearby businesses are banding together to take action.

“We wanted to be part of the downtown revitalization, but nothing’s really been done “with Crislip,” said Ginger Reichl, president of **Pinstripe Marketing**. “We kept hoping something would come through.”

Reichl moved her company to Central Avenue in December 2007 but soon found that Crislip, located at 641 Central Ave., had been abandoned and boarded up and had become an eyesore. She met with representatives from the **St. Petersburg Preservation Society** about Crislip, and they decided to create an online petition calling for exterior beautification of the property.

Reichl says she is willing to organize a volunteer effort to get the job done. All she needs is the permission of Tom Gaffney, Crislip’s owner.

“We want to very respectfully and nicely say that we want [Crislip] to be a part of our community,” said Reichl. “This is our way of showing that we’re all in this together.”

### Long-term appreciation in value and history

Gaffney, head of **Oldsmar Land Holding Corp.**, bought Crislip from 601 Central LLC in July for \$2.3 million. Although his predecessors had plans to construct a high-rise, mixed-use condominium on the property, Gaffney said that he never intended to develop anything there. Rather, he purchased the property for its long-term appreciation.

The petition has been signed mostly by other small business professionals in the area and has 28 signatures so far. Bob Devin Jones, artistic director and co-founder of **The Studio@620**, and Mandy Minor, senior copywriter and business manager of **J. Allan Studios**, are among those who support the project.

Will Michaels, president of the Preservation Society, believes that Crislip is due for a renovation.

“As is, it contributes to a bad effect on the community,” Michaels said. “Hopefully, we can remove the boards and make sure the front of the building is attractive enough to maintain the ambience of Central Avenue.”

The city cannot force Gaffney to beautify the exterior, since all the minimum property maintenance standards are being met, Julie Weston, the city’s director of development services, said. But she would be willing to facilitate a discussion between Gaffney and the petitioners.

Although he hadn’t heard about the petition, Gaffney said that he would consider the proposal.

“I’d be willing to listen to anybody’s ideas,” he said. “If someone wants to come and beautify the property and it’s not going to cost me anything, that’s great.”

Following a call from the **Tampa Bay Business Journal**, Gaffney contacted Peter Belmont, an attorney and board member of the Preservation Society, about the petition, said Reichl. A meeting to discuss its proposal is pending.



JIM STEM

As of now, the owner of the historic Crislip Arcade in St. Petersburg has no plans to renovate the building.

[View Larger](#)