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Three Restaurants Could Open, One In Former Borders, In Burlington

BY JIM CRONIN | BANKER & TRADESMAN STAFF WRITER

A Seasons 52 upscale restaurant is expected to occupy about 10,500 square feet of vacant space in a former Borders bookstore at Wayside in Burlington.

Seasons 52 is one of three new restaurants looking for approvals from the Burlington Planning Board to open in the retail center, formerly known as Wayside Commons.

Seasons 52 is hoping to open its first New England restaurant on the first floor of the former Borders with about 331 seats, according to industry sources familiar with the process. Even with the new addition, about 11,500 square feet of the former Borders location will remain vacant.

The other restaurants seeking space are Bonefish Grill, a seafood-centric eat-

ery that would be opening its first New England location, and Potbelly sandwich shop, which is also planning a new outlet for Logan airport.

That all three restaurants are hoping to open at Wayside is more than a coincidence, according to Mark Vaughan, a senior partner in the real estate practice group with Riemer & Braunstein law firm in Boston. Vaughan, who often represents restaurants in the application process, tells Banker & Tradesman that more retail and lifestyle centers are viewing restaurants as their key anchors.

“It used to be that a restaurant was an afterthought if there was space left over,” Vaughan said in a recent interview. “You’d try to put a restaurant in

there to fill it up. The cost of build-out for restaurants is traditionally a lot higher than typical vanilla retail space. Now they’re considered a revitalizing factor of retail centers. If you look at Legacy Place in Dedham or Patriot Place, the restaurants do quite well and are a main focus. Restaurants are being eyed to provide more of an entertainment and dining experience for customers [rather than just a place to eat]. People talk about the Internet as killing retail foot traffic. Until there’s a way for people to go out to eat on the Internet, you can’t find the dining experience online.” ■

Editor’s Note: The story has been updated to reflect changes.

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