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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City to consider sale of Northfield News building to Loon Liquors

Northfield, MN (April 5, 2024) —

The Northfield City Council is contemplating the sale of the property at 115 5th Street West better known as the Northfield News building to Loon Liquors. A public hearing is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 23rd in the City Hall Council Chambers. After the public hearing, the City Council will deliberate to consider action on the sale. There will be a discussion at the work session on Tuesday, April 9th at 6:00 p.m. to share information on the pending proposal. Details of the terms of the sale are still being finalized but will be forthcoming in preparation for the April 23rd public hearing.

Loon Liquors plans to remodel the building to accommodate a needed expansion of their production space and cocktail room. They hope to add a kitchen to provide farmer-focused food offerings and continue their craft non-alcoholic beverage offerings.

In 2022, the city purchased 115 5th Street West and 411 Water Street (Ameriprise building) as part a long-term redevelopment strategy to keep downtown Northfield healthy and to make the land adjacent to the river more active. The building owners and tenants were receptive to selling their properties to provide an opportunity to establish an attractive, expanded gateway into Downtown that capitalizes on the location adjacent to the historic district, while running along the riverfront.

“Loon Liquors’ move to purchase this site is a success story of our business retention and growth strategy. “This is exactly the type of situation we’ve been cultivating,” said Nate Carlson, Northfield’s Economic Development Coordinator. “Loon Liquors has been pursued by other cities to relocate and expand their business. Based on our strategy and Loon Liquors’ commitment to this community, they will stay and expand within Northfield This is a prime example of successful economic development where a business starts and grows in Northfield.”

“In the last decade, city staff, the Northfield Economic Development Authority and city leadership have been proactively working with the business community to build relationships, understand their goals and facilitate opportunities for businesses to expand. Our goal is to

enhance the City's commercial/industrial tax base and grow tourism," said Jake Reilly, Northfield's community development director.

Loon Liquors is a feel-good local story. The craft distillery is owned and operated by its two co-founders Simeon Rossi and Mark Schiller, who are Northfield High School friends and graduates. The company was established in 2011 and has been producing certified organic spirits since 2014. They were the first legal distillery in Southern Minnesota in over 100 years. Distilleries were not allowed to have a cocktail room when they first opened.

Rossi and Schiller have a Northfield-centric mission. They are committed to making their spirits 100% from scratch using locally sourced organic ingredients, while being environmentally conscious of their production methods. About 90 percent of the ingredients in their products are sourced within 10 miles of the distillery.

The new site will allow Loon Liquors to expand its operations and cocktail room. Loon Liquors distributes its spirits to more than 300 liquor stores, bars, and restaurants in Minnesota. This expansion will create the opportunity to expand regionally; possibly into international markets.

While Loon Liquors is already a destination for tourists, it will bring new life to downtown Northfield, increase visits to downtown businesses and play a key role in invigorating the riverfront. Schiller says 70 to 80 percent of customers come from outside the Northfield area.

"We imagine a downtown location will allow us to put our figurative and literal roots deeper in the Northfield community, while bringing in many new visitors to discover what we find so amazing about this town. Our plan is to focus on the farmers and community members who make us strong, whether it's the organic wheat and barley grown by B&T farms, the beautiful berries hand-picked at Little Hill, or the future farming partnerships we have yet to develop. We are fortunate to be surrounded by so many talented farmers, and we want to put them front and center for everyone to experience." said Schiller.

The city will continue to refine redevelopment plans for downtown including the Ameriprise building, Northfield Liquor Store and the public parking lot site located at 5th and Washington Streets.

Real estate and development can be a fluid, fast-moving market. "The City can take a much more strategic and long-term approach to redevelopment than a typical private developer. We can follow the vision and goals for the community as a whole and seek out the best development opportunities available," Reilly explained.

We're committed to helping our local businesses stay, grow and be successful in Northfield."

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