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Cleanup of Broyhill site set to begin

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Lenoir has cleared the way to begin removing layers of debris that have stood as a barrier to development at a former furniture factory site.

The Lenoir City Council awarded a \$547,071 contract to RCI Demolition of Charlotte to remove debris from the site of the old Broyhill Furniture plant at the corner of Virginia Street and College Avenue in Lenoir.

The 15-acre property was home to a furniture plant for more than 100 years, until Broyhill closed the site in 2007. In 2009, Applied Abatement Concepts purchased the property and demolished the buildings for scrap, but the company quickly went out of business and abandoned the site in a state of disarray, the city said in a press release.

In 2014, the city foreclosed on the property for unpaid taxes.

The property is considered a brownfield, a former industrial site that could still be reused but might have environmental contamination. In 2018 the city was awarded a \$300,000 Environmental Protection Agency grant to study brownfields in the area.

In 2019, the city received a \$300,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission to clean up the property, which will partially fund the RCI project. RCI plans to begin cleanup before the end of 2020 but the company has not set a completion date.

Through the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's Brownfields Program, developers and property owners can enter into a brownfield agreement with the state that can relieve the developer of the costs associated with dealing with past contamination.

About 20 sites in Lenoir are listed as brownfields, including the old Bost Lumber property on the west end of downtown, the Singer Furniture facility on Norwood Street, and the Blue Bell Inc. building on College Avenue. There is a renovation project underway that is converting the Blue Bell building into 46 market-rate apartments.

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