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Commercial Real Estate

Gentlemen's club, motel sells for nearly \$2M after bidding war



The Escape Nightclub and 24-room Motel Carlton on Pulaski Highway in Eastern Baltimore County sold at auction on July 10.

MELODY SIMMONS/BBJ



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Story Highlights

- Escape Nightclub and Motel Carlton sold at auction for \$1.96 million.
- A local buyer acquired the property after lively bidding.
- The sale includes the liquor license, parking lot and manager's house.

The high-profile sale of a gentlemen's club and motel complex on Pulaski Highway led to a bidding war on Thursday before a crowd of about 50 potential buyers and onlookers.

Escape Nightclub and the 24-room Motel Carlton were sold to a local, but undisclosed, buyer for \$1.96 million, which includes a buyer's premium charge, auction officials said. The auction was held online and in person at the complex on Route 40 and officially attracted 10 bidders who registered with a \$100,000 deposit.

There was no opening bid, but the auction took off quickly after starting at noon. The winning bid of \$1.85 million was hit after a period of aggressive and "lively" bidding, said Charles Billig, principal at A.J. Billig & Co. Auctioneers, which handled the sale.

"Bidding was lively, with five parties actively participating, and ultimately landed at \$1.85 million," Billig said. "The total contract price was a little under \$2 million, including the buyer's premium. The family that owned the property, and had for several decades, seemed pleased with the outcome if a little somber about the turning of a multi-generational page."

Billig declined to disclose the buyer but noted they are local to Maryland. He also couldn't say what's next for the property. The seller was listed in state property records as Travel-Inns Inc. with an address at the Excape Nightclub.

The auction house sold the complex under a partnership with MacKenzie Commercial Real Estate of Lutherville, which had listed the properties for sale earlier this year.

The sale is expected to close in the next few months and includes both properties, a 100-car flat-surface parking lot, a seven-day liquor license with an adult use permit and a large "manager's house" near the Excape Nightclub front door, Billig said.

The auction of the well-located adult entertainment club at 10025 Pulaski Highway was advertised as an opportunity to redevelop the property that sits on about four acres near White Marsh on a commercial strip known for motels, auto lots, warehouses, gas stations and big-box stores.

The property's two anchor structures, Excape Nightclub and Motel Carlton, were built at separate times over the past nearly 70 years. Much of the property is zoned for "business roadside" commercial use under the county code, which allows for several uses, including a big-box store, industrial warehouse or logistics center. A portion of the site is zoned for light manufacturing.