

HOMEPAGE

## New apartments may finally be built on old Palmetto fertilizer factory site. Here's how

BY RYAN CALLIHAN

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Heartland Fertilizer site, in downtown Palmetto, Florida, was taken down Sept. 8, 2021. The brownfield property will be remediated and a new residential project is being planned. BY PALMETTO CRA VIA FB

## PALMETTO

A breakthrough in soil remediation technology could turn the home of an abandoned fertilizer facility into Palmetto's newest apartment community.

A developer is working with Palmetto's Community Redevelopment Agency to restore the eight acre property, which the city described as a "hazardous eyesore" in a recent press release.

Past efforts to repurpose the property have stalled, but city officials are hopeful that this attempt will bring long-awaited revitalization.

For almost 100 years, the property on the 900 block of 11th Avenue West served as the base of operations for the [Heartland Fertilizer Company](#), which provided local farmers with much-needed resources before plant operations stopped and the building was demolished in September 2021.

Now, officials say it's time to convert the property into something that fits with the surrounding neighborhood.

Because of the amount of phosphate, nitrogen and arsenic in the soil from factory operations, the site was declared a [brownfield site](#) by the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Those sites require special cleaning before it can be developed into housing.

To clear the harmful contaminants from the area, Palmetto Green LLC, which purchased the property in June 2021, partnered with Biotech Restorations.

"One of the prime things that a (Community Redevelopment Agency) does, which is very critical to any community, if you have contaminated sites, you clean them, and it's part of the redevelopment," Palmetto Mayor Shirley Groover Bryant said. "It is part of a neighborhood. We're just anticipating bigger and better things for it."



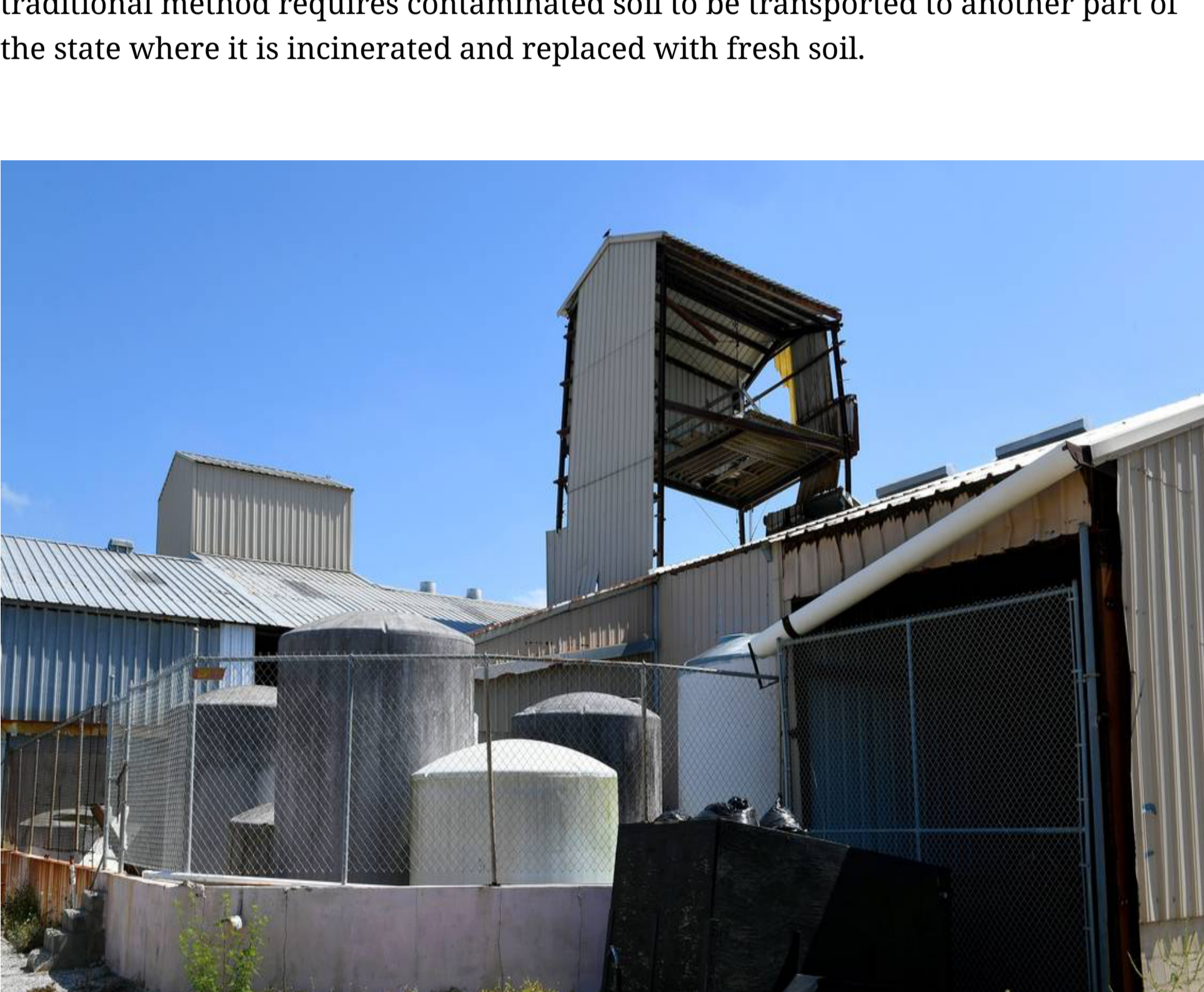
Developers are remediating the contaminated soil at 917 11th Avenue West in Palmetto, the former home of the Heartland Fertilizer Company plant, to build market-rate apartments. The plant, which was demolished in September 2021, is shown in this 2018 Bradenton Herald file photo. Tiffany Tompkins [ttompkins@bradenton.com](mailto:ttompkins@bradenton.com)

According to a press release, Biotech Restoration's approach has been the most cost-effective method yet, paving the way for the site to finally be redeveloped. Previous efforts had stalled due to the costs associated with restoring a brownfield, but the new method cuts the price in half, officials say.

"We are excited about revitalizing the property and are pleased to partner with Biotech Restorations with their economical, efficient, and green bioremediation technology," Bryant said in a prepared statement.

In an interview with the Bradenton Herald, Xavier Colon, interim director of the Palmetto Community Redevelopment Agency, said Biotech Restoration is in the final stages of cleaning the property. The company takes advantage of microbes, which are microscopic organisms that can be placed in the soil to [eliminate harmful contaminants](#).

Colon said Biotech Restoration's approach to remediation is cheaper because the traditional method requires contaminated soil to be transported to another part of the state where it is incinerated and replaced with fresh soil.



Developers are remediating the contaminated soil at 917 11th Avenue West in Palmetto, the former home of the Heartland Fertilizer Company plant, to build market-rate apartments. The plant, which was demolished in September 2021, is shown in this 2018 Bradenton Herald file photo. Tiffany Tompkins [ttompkins@bradenton.com](mailto:ttompkins@bradenton.com)

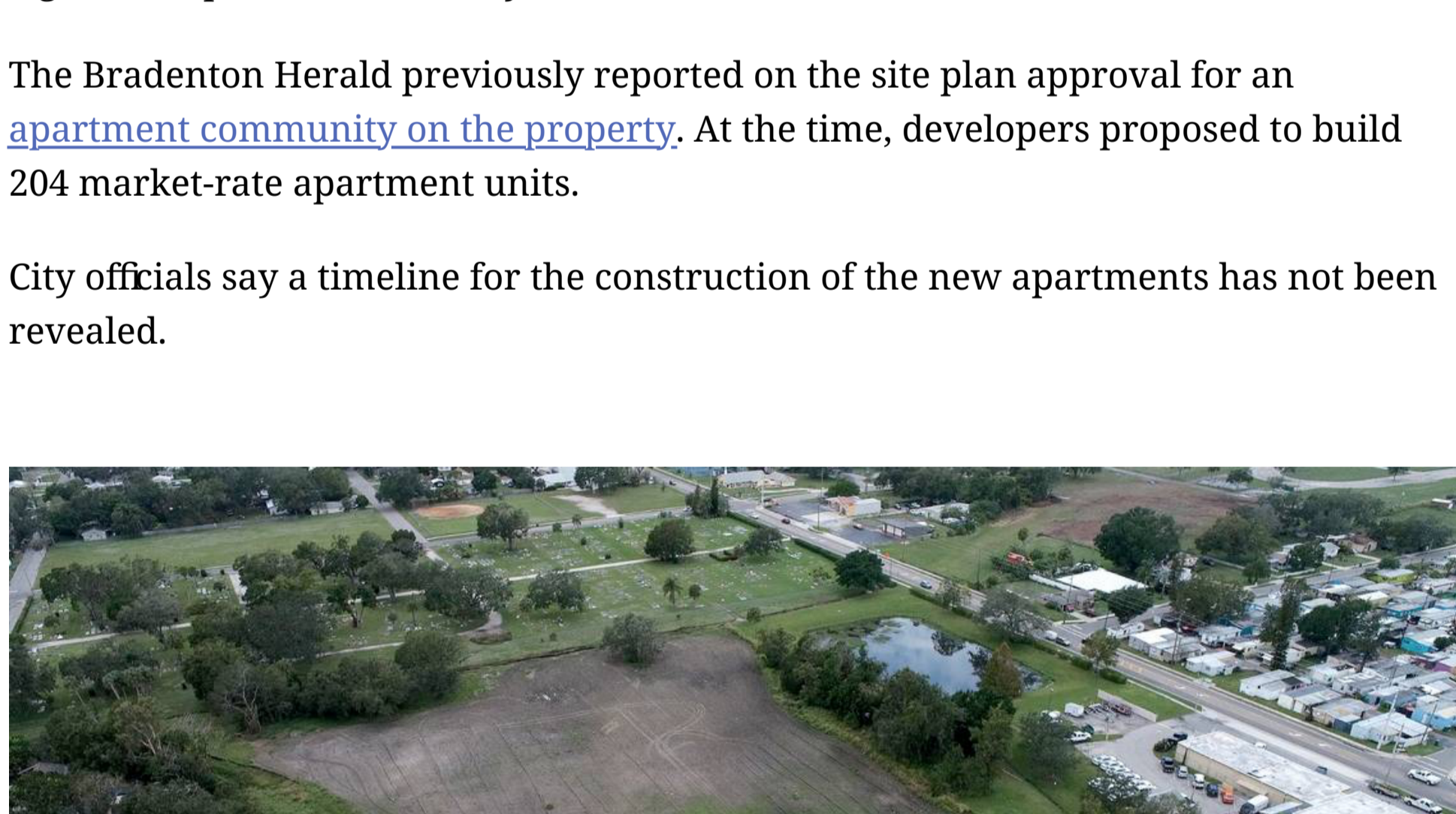
"We've been making advances in biologically based soil restoration for decades now and are excited to show the city and its CRA that this formerly toxic property can be healthy, productive and truly serve the community once again," said Chris Young, Biotech Restoration's founder and chief technology officer.

Clearing the property will provide a major boost to the Palmetto's 10th Street West corridor, according to Bryant, who noted that the warehouse now sits in the middle of a neighborhood.

"A lot of areas around us, a lot of them are desperate for housing. That corridor is great for housing," Bryant explained. "We're really excited about it and think it'll be a good complement to the city."

The Bradenton Herald previously reported on the site plan approval for an [apartment community on the property](#). At the time, developers proposed to build 204 market-rate apartment units.

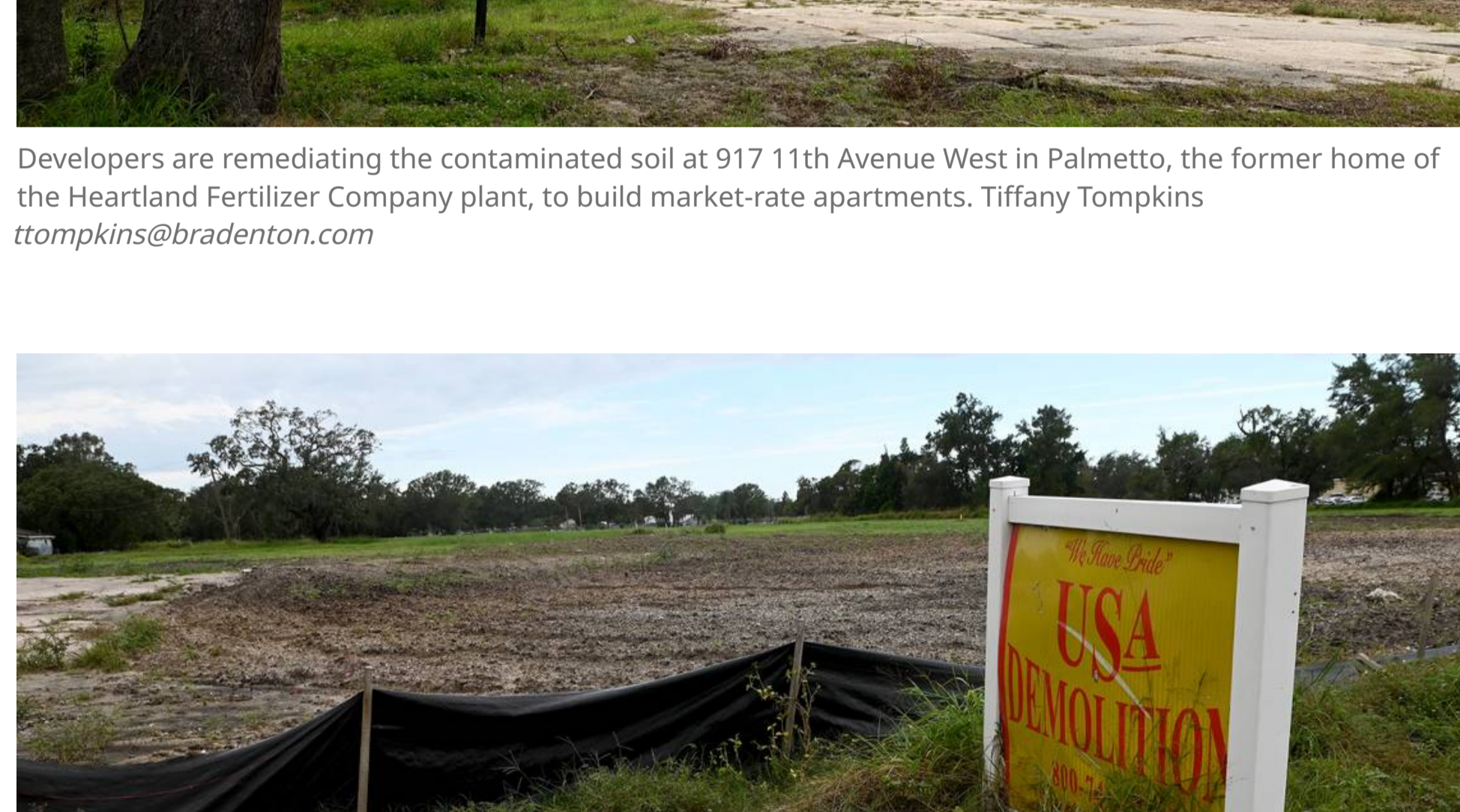
City officials say a timeline for the construction of the new apartments has not been revealed.



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RYAN CALLIHAN

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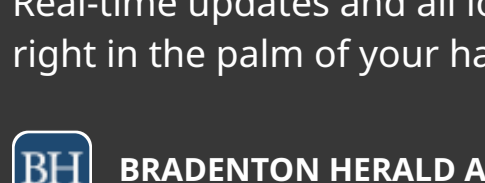
Ryan Callihan is the Bradenton Herald's County Reporter, covering local government and politics. On the weekends, he also covers breaking news. Ryan is a graduate of USF St. Petersburg.

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