



NORTH ANDOVER CITIZEN

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Downtown shopping center gets new name

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The Messina family thanked the town for their help, and the town thanked the Messinas for their continued investment in North Andover, when the family unveiled the new name of the downtown shopping center — formerly known as the Messina Shopping Centre — during a small ceremony Tuesday night.

Family patriarch and longtime merchant in town Santo Messina unveiled the new sign with a swift pull of a cord, and the new **First & Main Marketplace** was presented.

"On behalf of the Board of Selectmen and the Town of North Andover, I just want to say how pleased we are to have a family like the Messinas in town," said Selectman Rick Nardella minutes before the unveiling.

The new name of the shopping center marks the end of almost two years of work by the Messina family's NA Realty Group on a major redesign and renovation of the decades-old shopping center.

Named the Messina Shopping Centre for "40 years almost to the day," according to Santo Messina's daughter Tina Messina, the new name comes as one component of a greater "redefining of the downtown area," she said.

While Santo Messina said he "would have liked to see Messina" in the name, he said there could be a new business coming to the shopping center bringing back the family name and replacing the former Messina's Liquors, which closed during the center's renovations.

This shop won't be like the last liquor store, though, said Tina Messina.

"There are a bunch of changes that are being made. It's a different store concept. As time progresses we'll be releasing that," she said.

Santo Messina's son-in-law Claude Elias described the new store as, "Something Massachusetts has never seen before. The concept came from California."

Tina Messina said they're hoping the store will be open in October.

Asked how they came to choose First & Main Marketplace for the new moniker, Tina Messina said they hired Beverly designer Arthur Eilertson to develop the new brand and logo.

Eilertson said coming up with the name was as easy as looking at the center's location.

"In this case it was kind of interesting. I came here and I read the street signs and I read, 'First and Main.' It was kind of magical," said Eilertson, who's done his fair share of naming successful businesses.

Does the name CambridgeSide Galleria ring a bell? Eilertson came up with that one for developer Stephen Karp.

"He had a different name for it and I said, 'Let me think about it,'" said Eilertson.

He explained that he'd lived in the area and he and his friends had always called the area of the new mall the "Cambridge side" of town, and the rest is history.

Tina Messina said Eilertson's



COURTESY PHOTOS

Santo Messina unveils the new sign at First & Main Marketplace, formerly known as the Messina Shopping Centre.



The Messina family, owners of North Andover's downtown shopping center, joins together for a photo during Tuesday night's shopping center sign unveiling. Pictured, from left: Mary Messina, Laura Elias, Sam Messina, Santo Messina, Anne Messina, Tina Messina, Joe Messina and Anne Messina.

story of walking by the North Andover shopping center and seeing the street signs First and Main sold her on the new name.

As for what's next for the center, Tina Messina said four locations are still available for those interested in opening up a business in the newly renovated First & Main Marketplace. A total of 20 spaces exist at the center. Current tenants include CVS Pharmacy, Anton's Cleaners, Lase-

Way, Clifford Jewelers and Today's Barber Shop.

At a cost of nearly \$7 million, the two-story office and retail space saw improvements including a new façade, green landscaping and an updated signage and lighting scheme.

Tina Messina said they'd like to see a variety of businesses open up in the spaces, including

perhaps a bakery, a shoe store or a clothing store — shops that are "more in tune with the town," she said.

As for her feelings on the evening of the new center's official unveiling, she said, "I'm very pleased with the outcome and couldn't be happier. I think the town of North Andover has done a great job in making it as simplistic a process as possible."