

10-barrel brewery and restaurant planned for downtown New Bedford

A team of local investors wants to build New Bedford's and the region's first brew pub a block from State Pier on Union Street.

The Moby Dick Brewing Co. is seeking local, state and federal approvals for a 10-barrel brewery operating within a restaurant at 52 Union St., located at the corner of Union and Water streets, just across from the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

The investment team includes:

- Maureen Sylvia Armstrong, President and CEO of the Sylvia Group in Dartmouth
- Peter Kavanaugh, owner/CEO of Brownell Boat Stands of Mattapoisett and President of La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries of Dartmouth
- Richard Lafrance, President and CEO of Lafrance Hospitality, which operates the New Bedford Fairfield Inn & Suites in New Bedford and White's of Westport, among other hotel and restaurant holdings
- David Slutz, Managing Director of Potentia Business Solutions and former CEO of Precix Inc. of New Bedford.
- Bob Unger, principal of Unger LeBlanc Inc. Strategic Communications and former editor and associate publisher of The Standard-Times and SouthCoast Media Group.

The brew pub will serve distinctive pub fare and will include a full-service bar as well as a brewery operation that will serve its own beers and ales.

It expects to serve guests in outdoor seating along Union Street on the cobblestone sidewalk that was installed by the city to help attract investors to the downtown historic district.

The brew pub's design, menu and atmosphere will echo New Bedford's historic whaling and fishing history with authentic artwork, photography and artifacts.

Plans also include a retail store that will sell food, beer and memorabilia.

"This is an idea that some of us have been thinking about for a long time but which came together quickly over the winter," said Slutz, the company's president. "We all wanted to do something that would be interesting and good for the City of New Bedford. We hope to be involved in lots of community initiatives, provide some jobs and help attract visitors to the city."

Kevin Caldwell of Caldwell Architectural Associates of New Bedford is the project's architect.

The New Bedford Economic Development Council and BayCoast Bank have lent guidance and support for the project, which awaits federal permits, as well as local and state approvals for various aspects of the plan.