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KISSIMMEE PICKS AZURE AND SKY-VIEW AS DOWNTOWN HOTEL PARTNERS



By **LAURA KINSLER** | lkinsler@growthspotter.com | GrowthSpotter
PUBLISHED: July 1, 2025 at 10:00 PM EDT | UPDATED: July 2, 2025 at 5:47 PM EDT

Go big or go home. That was the theme of Tuesday night's Kissimmee Commission meeting. And commissioners went big, voting unanimously to partner with two developers who promised them the moon.

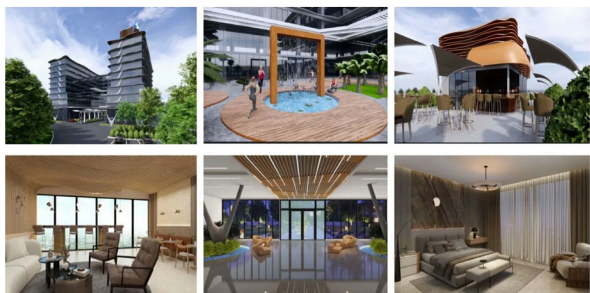
The commission selected Azure Hotels 'International to build a \$150 million luxury, boutique hotel and new convention center on the site of the existing Kissimmee Civic Center.

Skyview Companies also won the full support of the commission for its mixed-use proposal at Toho Square for a 128-room boutique hotel and condo development.

"Today, this sets the road for where Kissimmee wants to grow," Mayor Jackie Espinosa said.

Azure CEO Ramon Gomez told commissioners their vision was to transform Downtown Kissimmee into a dynamic hub that blends rich cultural heritage with modern innovation.

"By replacing the aging civic center with a state-of-the-art hotel and convention center, we aim to position Kissimmee as a leading destination in Central Florida, enhancing its appeal for residents and tourists alike, while setting the stage for future development and prosperity," he said.



Azure Hotel International provided two hotel options for consideration. Both would offer 4.5-star quality, with flexible meeting space, a full-service restaurant and bar, a spa, rooftop pool and car service to Kissimmee Gateway Airport. (Courtesy of Azure Hotel International, Inc.)



Skyview Companies' proposal included references to the adjacent "Downtown Gather & Grow" project, a mixed-use tower with apartments and a grocery store on the ground level. (Rendering by CBA Architects + Planners)

Gomez told GrowthSpotter he felt confident going into the meeting and that the management team from Preferred Hotels and Resorts had already called to congratulate them. The developer has named a design partner with panache: Pininfarina.

"This will be one of 10 that we're going to do," Gomez said. "Kissimmee is going to have the privilege of having the first Azure by Pininfarina Design hotel."



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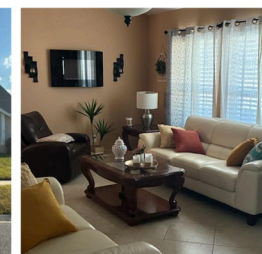
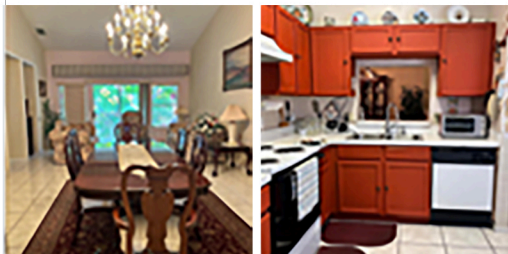
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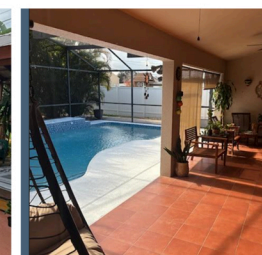
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KISSIMMEE CHOOSES TEAM TO LEAD DEVELOPMENT OF AIRPORT PROPERTY



By **LAURA KINSLER** | lkinsler@growthspotter.com | GrowthSpotter
PUBLISHED: November 11, 2025 at 4:00 PM EST



The Kissimmee City Commission has approved a memorandum of understanding with a local firm to act as master developer of the Kissimmee Gateway Airport. (City of Kissimmee)



The master plan calls for a mix of 30,000-square-foot and 15,000 square-foot hangars totaling 330,000 square feet on the golf course quadrant. (City of Kissimmee)

With construction plans filed for the new Hyatt Studios at Kissimmee Gateway Airport, city officials are bringing in a new team to come up with a plan to develop the rest of the airport property.

City Commissioners unanimously approved a Memorandum of Understanding last week with the Kissimmee Airport Development Company LLC (KADC) to begin the 90-day due diligence period prior to signing a development agreement. The company is led by Hector Lizasuain, former CEO of Magic Group of Companies, and partners Jim Shivers and Robert Turchetta.

Lizasuain told GrowthSpotter his company has been in discussions with city officials about the airport property for years, but the project could only move forward after the Federal Aviation Administration approved the city's adopted airport master plan. Future improvements could include a U.S. Customs & Border Patrol outpost, a vertiport, and hangar space.

The master plan contemplates airport improvements and new development on all four quadrants of the complex. One of the biggest challenges will be to convert the long-

closed city golf course into land suitable for corporate hangars and other airport supportive uses. Lizasuain said the city wants KADC to determine if the existing pond can be relocated.

"It's not a drainage pond," he said. "It was a borrow pit." He said the surveyors from Johnston's Surveying was on-site Friday to begin working on the topographical and boundary survey work. The company has also engaged Boyd Civil Engineering and Modica & Associates environmental consultants to assist with the due diligence.

They hope to be in a position by mid-March 2026 to determine the cost estimates and financial feasibility of the project. KADC will front all of the costs for the environmental review and engineering, and they will have a year to perform and negotiate a public-private-partnership agreement with the city to act as master developer of the airport.



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THE SMOKE AND MIRRORS BEHIND KISSIMMEE'S MAGIC DEVELOPMENT



Magic Development promised to build luxury skyscrapers on Kissimmee's W192 tourism corridor, but the Magic Place site is still vacant. (Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel)



By **LAURA KINSLER** | lkinsler@growthspotter.com | GrowthSpotter
PUBLISHED: October 16, 2025 at 5:00 PM EDT | UPDATED: October 23, 2025 at 4:19 PM EDT

The founders of Magic Development promised to bring high design, sexy architecture and a world-famous luxury brand to Kissimmee's W192 corridor. But in the end, it was a magic show, based on illusion and sleight of hand.

This is the story of developers who collected \$87 million in deposits from hundreds of investors, but six years later have closed just 18 units.

Riding a wave of success from the sell-outs of their first two Magic Village vacation home resorts, founders Rodrigo Cunha and Luis Sinelli unveiled their latest venture at a splashy poolside cocktail party in 2016 to introduce their architecture team from Pininfarina, the renowned Italian design firm behind luxury sports cars like Ferrari and Maserati. Cunha, the smooth-talking CEO from Brazil, had spent six months courting Paulo Pininfarina before he agreed to lend his name and talents to the project, dubbed Magic Place by Pininfarina.

To call the project ambitious would be an understatement. The initial \$1.7 billion plan for Magic Place by Pininfarina envisioned 1,850 condo resort units spread among five residential buildings, each with a pair of soaring towers. Plans also included a luxury hotel and 250,000 square feet of retail, restaurants and offices. Osceola County had never seen anything like this before.

It still hasn't. GrowthSpotter examined

While the founders dropped grandiose announcements, portraying themselves as the epitome of success, the company was drowning in debt, facing liens from dozens of construction companies and subcontractors, records show. Cunha and Sinelli,



The developer hired three different retail-focused brokerages to sign luxury brands for Magic Place, but none were successful. (Rendering by Pininfarina)

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THE SMOKE AND MIRRORS BEHIND KISSIMMEE'S MAGIC DEVELOPMENT



The third Magic Village townhouse development was designed by Pininfarina and carries the luxury Italian brand. (Rendering by Pininfarina)

who took a less visible role than his gregarious partner, had siphoned off millions of dollars from lenders and investors who had made deposits for the vacation homes in Magic Village 1 to subsidize their own extravagant lifestyle, according to a lawsuit filed by the current owner of the company. Between them, the two had created dozens of limited liability companies, including LS Toys LLC and RGC Toys LLC, and receipts showed they transferred funds from Magic Development to buy two planes, a yacht, jet skis, and even a private island in the Bahamas — all claimed as business expenses.

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