

Club

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lot unless a developer comes forward with a new idea.

Longtime Body Shop manager John Schroeder watched the demolition briefly, saying that the strip club, in its own unique way, played an important part in the downtown business scene.

"It might not have been the sweetest business," he said. "But it was a business that made its own way for a lot of years."

Originally opened in

the 1950s as a tavern, the establishment was known at various times as Emil's Bar, the Ticker Tape Lounge and the Lido Lounge. The owners introduced topless dancers in the 1980s and changed the name to The Body Shop.

Travis owned the property but sold the business in 1995 to Wayne Franzen, who operated The Body Shop with his son, Doug, until the city bought the place and shut it down earlier this year.

Franzen said Thursday he had no sentimental ties to the building, and he would gladly go on to his

VIDEO ONLINE

Click on this story at greenbaypressgazette.com to see a video of Thursday's demolition.

next business venture.

"We had some fun with it, and we made some money with it," he said. "But it was time to move on."

Situated at the corner of Monroe and Main Street, The Body Shop was in a highly visible location at a time when Green Bay city leaders are working to revive downtown as a center for business, tourism and

residential life. New businesses in recent years have invested millions in downtown facilities that will employ hundreds of people.

City officials hope redevelopment of The Body Shop site will transform the area into a major new gateway into downtown.

Rick Chernick, owner of Camera Corner Connecting Point, located across the street, said his customers and employees were never comfortable having a strip club nearby. Chernick joined the mayor at the demolition ceremony and applauded the city for tak-

ing action.

"It's going to make the city safer and cleaner — just a better place," he said. "It should be like this for Green Bay."

Several spectators turned out to watch the strip club reduced to rubble.

Among them were a few Christian Community Center members who said they opposed The Body Shop for religious reasons. The group stopped to join hands and pray while bulldozers were knocking down the walls.

"This was an answer to a prayer," said Jacob Schwahn, who was among

that group.

But another spectator, Scott Blagg, said he was a frequent Body Shop customer and he did not find the establishment offensive. He said the club "had a nice friendly atmosphere."

Blagg also noted that adult entertainment has long been a part of American culture.

"That kind of stuff's been going on for how many years?" he said. "I'm just sad that it's gone."

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