

## VENICE

# Venice historic house, one of Sarasota County's oldest, to be coffee shop

*Black Gold Coffee Roasters to open new shop within 60 days of building's completion*



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### Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

The Venice City Council approved a lease agreement with Black Gold Coffee Roasters for the Lord-Higel House, the oldest house in Venice.

The coffee shop aims to be a community gathering space while honoring the building's history.

The lease is for \$1,000 a month with no profit-sharing provision.

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VENICE – [Lord-Higel House, the oldest house in Venice that was once envisioned as a museum](#), will soon have a new purpose, after the City Council unanimously approved a lease with Black Gold Coffee Roasters.

Respect for both history of the structure and the city of Venice will be incorporated in the coffee shop's operation, both Black Gold owner Gary Lauters II and General Manager Alyssa Williams told the council.

Williams said that through adaptive reuse, the goal is to turn the two-story structure into a thriving cafe but, “most importantly it’s to provide a gathering place.”

She said that they would work in collaboration with the Venice Museum & Archives to highlight the area's history.

Frank Wright, president of the Venice Area Historical Society, told the council during public comment that the lease was a good choice after meeting with Lauters and Williams, pledging that the society would drive business to the coffee shop and host programs there.

"We want them to succeed because if they succeed, we succeed," Wright said.

Larry Humes, a two-term president of Venice Heritage, Inc., the principal non-profit that led restoration efforts of Lord-Higel, which is also the second oldest home in Sarasota County, also emailed the council in support of Black Gold.

"My wife and I believe, however, the owners of Black Gold Coffee will create a venue that will not only serve as a gathering place for our residents and guests, but also continue to educate our citizens about this unique building and its place in our collective history," Humes wrote.

The Queen Anne Victorian-style structure was built in 1896 by Sarasota landowner and real estate promoter J.H. Lord on the southern shore of Roberts Bay. It was moved to its current location at 409 Granada Ave. in 2005.

Venice Heritage raised more than \$800,000 and volunteers spent thousands of hours on a restoration effort.

More information can be found at <https://veniceheritage.org/lord-higel-house>.

Black Gold Coffee Roasters, established in 2010, has its main operation at 2385 E. Venice Ave.

The lease on Lord-Higel House calls for the city to receive \$1,000 a month in rent and \$200 a month for water, sewer and electricity. But unlike the city's lease agreements with the Venice Pier Group and the now defunct Jetty Jack's Refreshment Deck, there is no provision for profit sharing.

The structure has 660 square feet on each floor, though the second floor cannot be open to the public because it is not ADA accessible.

The property includes a 250-square-foot storage building, ADA compliant bathrooms and six dedicated paved parking spaces.

The initial lease is for 48 months, with a mutual option to renew the lease in two 24-month increments.

It should open within 60 days of the lease agreement or within 60 days of the completion of planned improvements to the property.