

City rejects firm's \$344,000 plan to update land rules

By Debbie Carson

Staff Writer

City leaders decided not to hire a firm that would have revamped the city's land development code. The 40-year-old code has been equated to a "Model T that's been repaired over and over and over again" by Ralph Bosek, the city's director of community services.

City Council members Frank Chillura, Mark Knapp and Alison Fernandez voted against hiring nationally recognized Clarion Associates, a firm that is known for handling land-use and real estate.

The firm would have been used to create the city's new Land Development Code as it relates to the downtown development project.

"This is a big step," Bosek told the council on Jan. 16. "It's not cheap."

The city has spent the last 10 months and hundreds of hours working to negotiate a contract with Clarion.

The contract's price of \$344,000 was one of the sticking points for the council.

Councilman Chillura questioned the price of the contract, noting that the city had originally budgeted just \$100,000 for the modification of the land code.

He also said that he wanted to be sure that

See LAND RULES, page 23

LAND RULES, from page 1

the Torti Gallas downtown plan was not what the firm would base the land code on. Torti Gallas was the firm hired to craft the original 35-acre downtown redevelopment plan.

"The Torti Gallas plan doesn't fit Temple Terrace," the councilman said, noting that the plan would not be the one built.

He also said that the code needs to be real and not tied to Torti Gallas.

"It's not going to be a wish list," he said.

Clarion Associates' work would be to craft the

way the retail, office, residential and other downtown component should be built, including figuring out building heights, structural details and the overall feel to the downtown area.

"I just want to do something that is realistic, focused and is going to be effective," Chillura said.

City Attorney Ted Taub told the council it was his belief that the contract did not stipulate that the code had to be based on Torti's plan. Instead, it would be used as a starting point.

Councilman Ron Govin, who asked the council to support the contract, said that he, too, was put off by the amount of money Clarion would be paid. However, he did not want to put off hiring the firm any longer.

Councilman Mark Knapp, who voiced concerns about the price and value of the contract, said that he was also concerned that the new Land Development Code would throw other Temple Terrace properties into non-compliance, meaning that they violated the code. The Land Development Code, for

example, establishes set backs from property lines, among many other regulations.

Over the last four decades, the city's council has had to grant establish exceptions to the LDC as property has been annexed into the city. Councilman Ken Holloway supported Govin's motion to approve the Clarion contract. But, the other council members defeated it.

The council could decide to continue discussion on the contract until the next City Council meeting in February.