

## **City hikes rent of 6 downtown business tenants**

By Debbie Carson, Staff Writer

TEMPLE TERRACE — As the economy continues to worsen and city leaders try to grapple with the loss of its second downtown redevelopment partner, six businesses in the targeted area can expect to see their leases increase.

The businesses include a clothing retailer, a campaign headquarters office, a gardening center, a jewelry store, an international retailer and a beauty salon.

### **What could the city do to generate more revenue from the downtown site while it waits for the market to turn around and a new developer to sign a deal?**

Councilman Frank Chillura has recommended that the city reevaluate the lease rates within the redevelopment site. "Rent is dirt cheap," he said, "extremely cheap." He added that even if the city were to raise rent, rents would still be less than the market rate. City staff members are currently evaluating the leases within the redevelopment area.

And that's exactly what city staff members have done.

The following businesses will see their rates increase to at least \$5 per square foot:

- Alico Fashions
- Eddie Adams Jr. campaign headquarters
- Grace Hydro Organic Gardening Center
- Solitaire Jewelry
- American Middle Eastern Trading Co.
- and Magic Beauty.

"The city's costs to operate these shopping centers have continued to rise," said Michael Dunn, a spokesman for the City of Temple Terrace. "The lease rates at these shopping centers remains very low, even with the rate increase."

Several of the listed businesses' rates were at \$3.50 per square foot. Their new rates will be effective January 2009.

### **What lease rates can be found at the shopping centers?**

Rents range from \$1 a month for Masque Community Theatre to more than \$26,200 a month for Sweetbay Supermarket. Several businesses are charged \$3.50 per square foot, according to records provided to The Beacon.

Burger King, located on the southeast corner of Bullard Parkway and N. 56th Street, has the highest per square foot rent – \$17.36 for just under 3,600 square feet.

Some of the other higher rents are \$15 per square foot for Total Cleaning Services of Central Florida, which rents 225 square feet, Elizabeth McGuire CPA, who rents 144 square feet, and Marc Morris, who rents a little more than 1,000 square feet.

The three largest tenants in the downtown redevelopment area are Sweetbay, with 45,798 square feet

of space, Masque Community Theatre, with 25,400 square feet, and American Middle Eastern Trading Company with 21,067 square feet.

**How much revenue does the city generate from the leases?**

According to financial figures provided to the Beacon from Finance Director Diane Reichard last month, the city collects \$788,439 annually in revenue from the tenants between Bullard Parkway and Chicago Avenue. Between Chicago and the Hillsborough River, the city's revenue is \$377,993.