

Halloway criticizes Sweetbay, which city will not move

By Debbie Carson

Staff Writer

It's not every day that a government official publicly criticizes Sweetbay, the largest surviving tenant sitting in the middle of targeted redevelopment.

But that's exactly what happened last month during a city council meeting in Temple Terrace.

"They are not a big player in the grocery market here," said Councilman Ken Halloway said in February, noting that Sweetbay controls only 3 percent of the market share. Market leader Publix has about 40 percent of the Florida grocery market, by comparison.

He also said that Sweetbay's parent company Delhaize Group, has been selling off Kash n' Karry stores and closing other grocery stores.

He questioned what would keep Netherlands-based Delhaize from closing the Temple Terrace Sweetbay.

At the time, city leaders were upset and frustrated with negotiations with Tampa based-Sweetbay Supermarket, the largest anchor tenant in the city's downtown redevelopment area on N. 56th St. Sweetbay

See SWEETBAY, page 9

'Plan B') several times and I don't think it's fair or appropriate," Peek said near the end of the 1.5-hour long meeting. "We have been killing ourselves for this community," he continued, noting that Pinnacle/Ram has spent an "unbelievable" amount of time and money on the downtown project.

Just before the council made the decision to give the developer another two weeks to fine-tune its plans, Affronti asked the city's attorney, Ted Taub, to weigh in.

Taub said that though he has many thoughts on the way the project is progressing, he said he preferred not to voice them.

"I'm not worried about my job," the attorney said, though he said he was concerned that some on the council might resent his commentary.

"I have a lot of concerns for the city I've represented for over 35 years," said Taub.

Pinnacle/Ram is scheduled to make its presentation at the next council meeting on March 20. For the third straight council meeting, the council is expected to make a final decision - keep or toss Pinnacle/Ram.

For the results of the March 20 council meeting, check the Beacon's Web site, www.CNewsPubs.com and find the complete article in the March 28 edition of the Beacon.

SWEETBAY, from page 1

could be characterized as sitting in the "catbird's seat" since the grocer has a renewable lease that could allow them to stay until 2044 — far longer than any existing city leader is likely to be around.

Sweetbay officials were looking to the city for more than \$3 million to break its lease and move the newly remodeled Kash n' Karry-turned-Sweetbay elsewhere within the redevelopment zone.

One city council member in particular has criticized the company, calling into question the grocer's ability to stay competitive in the market.

Until recently, Sweetbay had been the proverbial thorn in the city's side.

The grocer wanted millions of dollars to move elsewhere for the sake of the downtown

rest of the project.

City leaders have criticized the plan, saying that they don't believe a fresh coat of paint would make the center look less like a strip mall.

"I feel there's more work that could be done to the Sweetbay plaza," said Community Services Director Ralph Bosek during a council meeting in late February.

The Delhaize Group, which owns Sweetbay through its Delhaize America unit, has food operations in 10 countries on three continents. The company employs approximately 142,000 people worldwide, including approximately 10,000 people in its Florida-based stores.

Three Pasco Kash n' Karry stores are the latest to shift to Sweetbay, as the chain completes Hillsborough conversions and focuses on other stores along the Nature Coast in Citrus County as well as Southwest Florida.

TOZIER, from page 1

took a blood sample from Tozier to run a toxicology test as well.

According to Michael Dunn, a spokesman for the department, results from that test could take 30 to 60 days from the crash — putting the results in sometime mid-February to mid-March.

While the Temple Terrace Police Department is continuing its investigation, the public's assistance is still needed.

Anyone who saw the collision or either vehicle prior to the crash is asked to call the Police Department, (813) 989-7111.

According to authorities, Garcia was driving alongside former Temple Terrace political candidate Tozier when their vehicles collided, sending Garcia's 2003 Honda Accord into a curb. The vehicle then went airborne and struck a retaining wall near the Publix supermarket in the area of Busch Boulevard and Beverly Drive.

STUDENT, from page 1

She sustained non-life threatening injuries, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office said.

Authorities said that El-Noursi was crossing Bearss Avenue near N. 18th Street just before 7 a.m. on March 8. She was in a cross-

project. And, if it isn't moved, it could continue to renew its lease options through 2044.

Sweetbay controls the majority of the plaza where it is located. There are numerous terms and conditions in the lease that would prohibit the city from attracting another grocery store to the redevelopment area.

Part of the lease agreements also restrict construction along N. 56th Street that would block Sweetbay's view corridor. Parking spaces, too, are part of the lease agreement, which means that the city could face a sea of asphalt between Sweetbay and N. 56th Street within the redevelopment area.

Late last month, the city council decided to keep Sweetbay where it is and try to work around the large anchor store.

Pinnacle/Ram, the developer vying to sign a contract with city for the project, has said that they would re-skin and repaint the Sweetbay plaza to make it look and feel like the rest of the downtown project.

The developer also suggested putting on new facades to make it blend in with the