

## Council, developer approve downtown's sale – more work ahead

By Debbie Carson, Staff Writer

TEMPLE TERRACE — What has been characterized as the easiest of several documents the City of Temple Terrace and developers had to create and agree on has finally been written. It was scheduled to be signed Wednesday, April 23.

But the “easiest” document took at least two months longer than originally anticipated, which does not appear to bode well for the groups as they prepare for at least two more documents and a closing on July 1.

Now that the Purchase and Sales Agreement has been approved, both sides can now work out the Easement and Maintenance Agreement and the Development Agreement.

Last Tuesday's approval was not unanimous. Instead, Councilman Frank Chillura voted against the deal, citing his previously voiced opposition to including the Arts and Education Center within the first phase of the downtown project.

He said that rather than rehash his arguments again, he would stand on his prior comments and not support the deal.

Councilman Ken Halloway, too, raised concerns at the council meeting regarding the inclusion of the arts center in the downtown project, echoing many of Chillura's comments.

Both councilmen were concerned with the restrictions Pinnacle/Ram, the development team, is placing on the uses of the center.

“It looks to me that's more like a lease agreement than a sales agreement,” Halloway said.

However, Halloway voted in support of deal, noting that the city has until 30 days prior to closing to officially decide on the arts center's location. Also, if the city has not pulled a building permit for the center within two years of closing, the land would revert back to Pinnacle/Ram. The \$500,000 the city would have paid for the property would be refunded.

“There are more beneficial options available to us to build the arts center and community center,” Halloway said, on a location that the city owns and under the terms the city wants.

“I don't see any gain to the city,” Halloway added.

Mark Connolly, the city's attorney, told the council after Chillura's comments that his team has done all it can do.

“We've done all the negotiating with Ram/Pinnacle that we can,” Connolly said, with regards to working the Arts and Education Center.

The allowable uses at the center are still subject to the developer's review and must be spelled out in the remaining documents.

“We really want what's best for both parties,” said Bob Skinner, a representative from the developer team.

He said that the use restrictions really are not as restrictive as they appear and that Pinnacle/Ram plans on sitting down with Hillsborough Community College to better assess what the school wants in the arts center and how its needs could be accommodated.

HCC's possible involvement in the Arts and Education Center caused a snag in negotiations in recent weeks. The school has talked with city leaders about having some classroom space for

arts-related or computer-related courses.

Representatives from Pinnacle/Ram have said that they would not support a full-time college within the center.

Council members took turns to ask their questions or to make comments regarding the sales agreement prior to their vote.

Councilman Mark Knapp said he had no questions and that he is "loving life, living a dream."

Councilwoman Alison Fernandez, too, said she had no questions and did not make comments regarding the agreement.

Councilman Ron Govin made the motion to support the sales agreement.

"Big night gang," said Mayor Joe Affronti after the vote was called.