

Temple Terrace property could make way for \$150M project

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TEMPLE TERRACE — Atlanta developer Michael Vlass says he has the solution for Temple Terrace's downtown redevelopment project, but he'll have to wait another week for the city council's perspective.

Vlass, a principal with The Vlass Group, presented plans for a 500,000-square-foot, \$150 million mixed-use development complete with retail, office space and even condominiums for 38 acres of land south of the North 56th Street and Bullard Parkway intersection. That project would be double the size of the \$50 million project previously proposed by the development team of Ram Development Co. and Pinnacle Realty Advisors, but city council members said during a Tuesday night meeting they weren't ready to hear new ideas just yet.

LACK OF CONFIDENCE?

"I want to know why I'm here tonight," Councilman Mark Knapp said following the presentation.

The council had decided previously to meet Oct. 23 to explore all options for the city's land in the redevelopment area. Mayor Joe Affronti, however, met with The Vlass Group — the council's second choice for a developer two years ago — in Atlanta earlier this month and called the special meeting Tuesday to encourage the council to move forward with Vlass Group.

"The timing of this whole thing and how quickly it moved, and how it's different from the original instructions from council to staff, trouble me," Knapp said. "I understand that everything is done with the city's best intentions at heart, and I believe that. But I'm just concerned about how we got here."

Affronti apologized for jumping the gun, and the council voted to hold off any decisions until its scheduled meeting next week.

That, however, didn't sit well with Vlass.

"Do you want us in your city?" Vlass asked following the vote. "Do you want us here? Do you see something wrong with our plan? I see this as a lack of confidence in us. I'm not looking for a chance to do anything, I don't need this chance frankly."

However, Vlass said he would return for the Oct. 23 meeting and listen to input from residents about the plan, which would create a new main street parallel to 56th Street and add at least 100 condominiums over a multiphased retail and civic project that could include a new city hall.

Vlass Group originally was the top choice of the city's hired management, but the council decided to go with the local partnership of Ram/Pinnacle. That relationship dissolved last month after neither side could come to terms with a development agreement.

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