

Redevelopment Developer Allotted A Final Chance

ORIGINAL PROPOSAL REBUFFED

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Although six years in the planning, a strong sense of uncertainty still exists about the future of Temple Terrace's downtown redevelopment. Not helping matters have been recent discussions between the Temple Terrace Redevelopment Agency and the principals of Pinnacle Realty Advisors/RAM Development, the master developer for the downtown redevelopment.

Following the developer's Dec. 19 unveiling of its plan to turn a 35-acre site into a new-urbanism-styled town center, the public/private partnership has been unable to reach an agreement over a host of issues. Among them are the land value, density and what buildings on the city-owned property should be razed, relocated or remain in place. The site is located at the southeast quadrant of Bullard Parkway and 56th Street.

Pinnacle/RAM has offered \$11.7 million for the parcel for which the city shows a land debt – including capitalized interest – of \$21.2 million, a figure that does not include improvements made to the property.

In addition, according to Skipper Peek of Pinnacle Realty, Sweetbay Supermarket wants \$3.175 million to relinquish its lease on its building situated in the heart of the project.

State – grants, HUD loans and Community Investment Tax dollars will cover a portion of the costs for the project, but the city would still be left with a \$6,333,185 shortfall.

"One of my biggest concerns is our loss on the property," Temple Terrace City Councilman Ken Halloway said. "We said we would keep the taxpayers out of the

equation – I'd like to see us hold to that."

Halloway is also in favor of keeping Sweetbay where it is, rather than move it further north toward Bullard Parkway, as suggested by the developer.

"The chain only has 3 percent of the grocery store market with 100 stores in Florida and they closed down 34 Kash n' Karry's in the state," he said. "I don't think they are making money."

Councilwoman Alison Fernandez has real concerns about the city's added debt, specifically how it's going to cover its outstanding loan on the property and the capitalized interest, a portion of which comes due in September.

"I don't know how we can do this with no affect to the taxpayer," she said.

Mayor Joe Affronti said he believes time is of the essence in moving the project forward.

"The way I see it there are three options – continue with Pinnacle/RAM to see if they can come up with something suitable, have another developer come in to compare their costs or sell the property," he said. "We need to move on this as soon as possible."

Councilman Mark Knapp said one of the main problems the city is dealing with is that there is no other plan to compare with Pinnacle/RAM's.

"We do not believe there is a better plan from the standpoint of a ground-up development. We can do a renovation plan," Peek said. "I think within a few weeks time we could come back with a couple of different plans, but we'll continue to be candid and tell you the truth. We do have some insight in what the market is."

Councilman Ron Govin, the council's representative at meetings between city staff members and the developer, admitted he found it difficult to deal with Pinnacle/RAM.

"I have not found Pinnacle/RAM very willing to listen.



Halloway

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We've been kind of shot down every time we brought up Sweetbay and every time we talked about our cost of the land they said they've done all they can," Govin said.

Councilman Frank Chillura, however, thought Pinnacle/RAM should be given another chance.

"If we go with another developer that will take time," he said. "Pinnacle/RAM said if you give them a couple of weeks they would come up with another plan. I feel Pinnacle/RAM has been upfront and most of what they've said makes sense. Two weeks is nothing compared to

the time spent on this project."

At the conclusion of the redevelopment agency meeting, the committee adjourned and immediately reconvened as a council body in a city council meeting to vote on the issue.

In a unanimous decision, the council voted to allow Pinnacle/RAM to come up with an alternate plan in two weeks, a time frame that coincides with the Feb. 20 council meeting. If the developer and council members fail to come to an agreement, the developer will be dismissed and council will seek another developer.