

A REDEVELOPMENT PLAN GONE AWRY

TEMPLE TERRACE - It was a roller-coaster year for the most ambitious project in Temple Terrace history, downtown redevelopment.

The city was close to signing a contract with Unicorp National Developments at the start of the year. The momentum was dealt a blow July 18, when the Orlando firm unexpectedly pulled out.

Unicorp executives soon changed their minds, asking for more time to work on the project. But on July 24, with little discussion, the city council unanimously accepted the company's withdrawal.

The council opted to again launch a national search for a developer. In early October, four development teams made pitches during public meetings on two consecutive nights.

At a special meeting the following week, the council unanimously chose a partnership with strong local ties and extensive retail, office and housing development experience, Pinnacle Realty Advisors (Tampa), Ram Development Co. (Palm Beach Gardens) and Cooper Carry (Atlanta).

The project began — at least symbolically — on Oct. 18 when officials initiated demolition of a long-vacant gasoline station the city bought as part of its redevelopment plan.

"We're very confident we have a plan that's grounded in reality," Skipper Peek, Pinnacle's managing partner, said at the ceremony.

On Dec. 19, the council unanimously approved a conceptual master plan for redevelopment, scheduling meetings with the developer to answer a multitude of questions and iron out details of the project.

The city intends to create a 35-acre New Urbanism-style development southeast of 56th Street and Bullard Parkway.