

# Builder Won't Go Down Lazy River

By LAURA KINSLER The Tampa Tribune

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TEMPLE CREST - Acres of grassy fields that can be developed for housing are rare in the city's densely packed neighborhoods, but north Tampa is home to just such a tract.

A local developer wants to rezone 9 acres north of the Hillsborough River for a 49-lot subdivision.

The site had been used as ball fields for First Baptist Church of Temple Heights, which is across the street on Regnas Avenue.

Builder Dave Clissett has partnered with Tristar Realty Group for his first subdivision project in Tampa. He said he has made extensive efforts to blend his development into the neighborhood - but which neighborhood?

To the north is Lazy River Drive, which is lined with pastel-colored, concrete-block homes on lots that are generally less than a fifth of an acre.

The neighborhood just east of the property, River Highlands Place, has a variety of architectural styles, large lots and mature trees dripping with Spanish moss. The home values are double those of Lazy River Drive.

Terry Neal, president of the Temple Crest Civic Association, said the community had always hoped the city would buy the land and convert it to a dedicated park. That doesn't mean the association opposes the development, however.

"We don't want another cookie-cutter development in our neighborhood," he said.

Clissett got the message. That's why he chose the River Highlands model, even though his lot sizes will be similar to those at Lazy River Drive. "If you look at the cul-de-sac behind us, those homes are all different kinds of styles," he said, "but they look great. As long as you have good architecture, it doesn't have to be the same style."

That's what drew homeowner Marvin Hunt and his two siblings to River Highlands Place five years ago. All three own houses on the picturesque cul-de-sac. "Each house is individual," Hunt said.

The new homes in Temple Heights Estates will start in the low \$200,000 price range, and the builder plans to save all of the grand trees on the property. The neighborhood will include a mix of one- and two-story homes.

"There will be a combination of architectural styles - some neoclassical, some are craftsman-style with front porches," Clissett said. "We've submitted eight different elevations."

Clissett has applied to rezone the property to a planned development. The rezoning hearing is scheduled for 6 p.m. Feb. 22 at Tampa City Hall.