

Memorial Finds A Home

By GEORGE WILKENS, The Tampa Tribune

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TEMPLE TERRACE - The search to find a home for a garden memorial to children has successfully ended where it started three years ago - Temple Terrace.

The Temple Terrace City Council has unanimously approved devoting a small portion of a planned riverfront park for an Angel of Hope memorial garden and statue.

The garden intended as a memorial to 'children gone but forever remembered by those who love them' will consist of a brick pathway leading to a granite base topped with a large bronze statue of an angel, the word 'Hope' engraved on its wings.

There will be no cost to the city, Beverly Hurley, president of the board of the local Angel of Hope chapter told the council Tuesday night. Flowers and plants around the memorial will be maintained by the organization, she said.

The Angel of Hope chapter's search for a memorial site started in Temple Terrace in spring 2004, with members drawn by the natural environment and pristine surroundings of the city's riverfront, Hurley said.

Slow-moving redevelopment plans delayed approval for that site, but a Temple Terrace member of the nonprofit group, Jeanne O'Neil, kept directors apprised of progress with the downtown project, Hurley said.

In the fall, 'Things started to happen again' with redevelopment, and the group renewed its efforts to obtain approval for the garden in Temple Terrace, Hurley said.

Similar gardens are in 71 U.S. cities, including South Bend, Ind. 'It's become a very important part of our community,' Scott Carson, a South Bend resident instrumental in the Angel of Hope effort there, told the council.

The park is to be developed on half of 6 riverfront acres the city bought in the 1990s, a site that will become part of the downtown redevelopment area. The statue will be visible from the 56th Street bridge over the Hillsborough River and will be a focal point of the park, Hurley said.

A solid fundraising plan is in place, including the sale of engraved bricks for the garden pathway, Hurley said. For a contribution of \$100 or more, the nonprofit group will have three lines engraved on the brick to honor the donor's loved one.

Hurley can be reached at (813) 832-3175.