

Officials To Rethink Downtown Options

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TEMPLE TERRACE - City leaders agreed Tuesday to reconsider the scope of downtown redevelopment and solicit suggestions from voters who vetoed a tax increase to help fund the proposed \$300 million project.

From a list of options outlined by City Manager Kim Leinbach, city council focused on his recommendation to take 30 to 45 days "to rethink and retool the city's redevelopment efforts." Consensus occurred during a 30-minute special workshop. A formal vote is expected Tuesday evening at the next regular council meeting.

"We know one thing for certain ... the citizens are not going to support a tax increase for the project," said Councilman Ken Halloway. The Aug. 2 referendum, which included a 1-mill property tax increase to help pay the city's one-fifth share of the public-private project, failed 57 percent to 43 percent. "I think, without a doubt, our people spoke," said Councilman Ron Govin. Govin said an e-mail from a resident summed it up best: "I think the vote was to get the city to rethink its plan."

Proponents and opponents alike expressed concern that "The project is too massive," said Govin, who met Monday night with Ken Tozier and three other residents who campaigned for a no vote in the referendum.

Redevelopment Director Ralph Bosek and Leinbach also participated in the two-hour meeting.

Govin said he was impressed by that two-hour meeting with opponents: "The very first thing everyone said is, 'We want to go forward.'" The session was not contentious and included some "great suggestions," Govin added.

Leinbach recommended that the city compile a list of concerns residents have about redevelopment, including proposed density, structures, condominiums and a parking garage.

Any revisions would be reviewed by Unicorp National Developments, the Orlando company hoping to forge the public-private partnership, Leinbach said.

Unicorp proposes a "New Urbanism" mixed-use design for redevelopment targeting the area southeast of Bullard Parkway and 56th Street, site of city-owned Terrace Plaza. The proposal includes 842 condominiums, a new city hall and cultural center.

"I would like to see more people involved," said Councilwoman Linda Shattles, pointing out that only one-third of the city's 13,768 registered voters cast a ballot in the referendum. "Not all voices were heard."