

Council considers TIF plan

School district opposes proposal to redevelop Kirksville shopping center

BY CHRIS BONING
Assistant News Editor

A plan to revitalize the south end of Kirksville might be on the horizon.

The Kirksville City Council met on Tuesday to discuss a redevelopment proposal first put forward in February by the real estate firm Raul Walters Properties, which owns the shopping center encompassing Stage, Tractor Supply Co. and other stores.

Kirksville's retail sector has been migrating to the north side of town, which has led to a decline at the south shopping center and made it difficult to attract businesses there, said attorney Jim Grice, who spoke on behalf of the firm.

"What we've tried to put forth here is hopefully an approach that can be perceived as being a responsible approach that will enable Raul Walters Properties, being the property owner and manager, to ... enhance the gateway into Kirksville, which is the interstate roadway coming in," he said.

Grice said the firm wants to improve the center both functionally and aesthetically, and its preliminary plans for

the site include landscaping, resurfacing the parking lot, replacing lights and renovating building fronts.

"The whole objective of this is to update [the center] to a contemporary standard that will attract the kind of tenants we want on the south side of town," he said.

Such actions will increase the center's marketability to businesses and its power as a revenue generator, Grice said.

Grice said the firm also would like to improve the roads around the center, although it would ultimately be the Missouri Department of Transportation's responsibility.

Grice said the firm has been busy talking to possible clients, although the firm also would like to retain its current clients, if possible.

"Those [stores] are good tenants," Grice said. "... They've been good partners up to now, and I'm sure Raul Walters wouldn't want to do anything to run them off, or anything like that," Grice said.

He said the firm estimates that redeveloping the shopping center will create at least 16 permanent jobs. Grice said that because the redevelopment plan is in its early stages, the firm has not projected its total cost yet.

Grice said the firm plans to fund the redevelopment project through the creation of a tax increment finance district, which is dependent upon the Council's

approval. TIFs permit the use of a portion of local property and sales taxes to assist funding the redevelopment of certain designated areas within a community, according to council documents. Tax dollars from a TIF go directly to the locations within the district, also according to the documents.

Grice said implementing the TIF will not affect Kirksville taxpayers individually. In addition to the TIF, another special sales tax zone called a community improvement district might be introduced for the shopping center to create even more revenue, he said.

City manager Mari Macomber said that prior to Tuesday, the council had been reluctant to discuss the plan because of opposition from the Kirksville school district. She said the district had objected to the TIF because it would take away revenue that would have ordinarily gone to local schools, but a compromise to split funds between the shopping center and the school district 50-50 was reached in September.

"The next step we thought was just because [the] school district has said yeah they're OK with these parameters, it is still ultimately up to the City Council to decide whether or not you want to pursue this," she said.

Macomber said that following Tuesday's meeting the next step is for Raul



File photo
Mayor Martha Rowe, center, and councilmembers have asked for more precise information from prospective developer Raul Waters.

Waters to provide more exact details on plans and the names of possible tenants. From there, the council will formulate its own plan based off of the new information from the firm and eventually open the issue in a public forum, she said.

Macomber said she supports redeveloping Kirksville's south end.

"I think there is merit to looking on how to enhance this area," Macomber said.

Macomber also said that despite the fact that a private developer proposed the TIF, the city still could benefit because Kirksville receives any of the extra revenue

after properties are brought up to where they should be financially.

"The point is the TIF enhances the tax base," she said.

Freshman Andrew Broderick works at the J.C. Penney located in the south end shopping center.

He said he thinks redeveloping the center would be a good idea because it could help the local economy.

Broderick said there isn't a lot of business at J.C. Penney when he works because most of the store's business comes from catalogue sales.

Students protest drug offense question on FAFSA

SSDP chapter will give students chance to voice opinions

BY HEATHER TURNER
for the Index

Students will have the opportunity to voice their opinions as to whether those who have committed a drug offense should be able to receive federal aid.

Students for Sensible Drug Policy will provide computers and phones from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 15 on the Quad for students to contact their representatives to comment on whether or not the drug offense question should be on the FAFSA form. The demonstration is part of a larger national campaign by SSDP chapters on college campuses across the country, said Kevin Richardson, executive director of the University's chapter of SSDP.

Students who are convicted of a drug offense while already receiving federal student aid currently are not eligible to receive

more government-financed aid, according to the FAFSA Web site. The length of time students are suspended from aid eligibility depends on the drug offense, Richardson said.

"If you're caught with just possession, you lose [federal aid] for one year," Richardson said. "The second time it's two years. The third time it's permanently."

Richardson said the penalty is more severe for those convicted of selling drugs.

In July the Senate passed the Higher Education Access Act of 2007, which expands funding for federal aid, with the question still on the FAFSA form, according to Library of Congress Records. SSDP members hope to convince enough members of the House of Representatives to keep the question off of the FAFSA form before the bill is passed sometime in October or November.

Richardson said he thinks there is a good chance the question will be removed because the House drafted an earlier version of the bill that did not include the amendment containing the question.

"If you're caught with just possession, you lose [federal aid] for one year. The second time it's two years. The third time it's permanently."

Kevin Richardson
Truman SSDP
Executive Director

"We're hoping there's a good chance that it will go through the House without the question, and then when it comes to the committee that decides on the final bill, they'll end up siding with the House version," Richardson said.

Rep. Rebecca McClanahan, D-Kirksville, said she is open to discuss the issue with students,

even though she is not involved directly with the legislation.

"I've been concerned about some of the enforcement of very minor offenses that sometimes appear to be overblown when we

could be using our energies on things that are more of a problem," McClanahan said.

She said her experiences working as a nurse with individuals who had substance abuse disorders has given her a broad understanding of the issue.

"[The question] doesn't even speak to the issue that a person that's even addicted has perhaps gone through treatment and has achieved sobriety after a significant addiction," McClanahan said. "I assumed that would still apply to them, which seems like an unfair restriction when a person is doing well."

Ryan, a former Truman student who asked for his last name to be withheld, was found to be in possession of marijuana on campus his freshman year at Truman. He said there still are ways to find funding to cover education costs. Ryan said he has been able to keep his scholarships and would have been able to keep the scholarships offered to him through the University by completing a program that included writing a paper and attending meetings, had he not opted to go

to another college.

"I honestly think Truman has the right idea with the writing of the paper, and I had to go to a counseling meeting, like a group counseling session," Ryan said.

Completing a drug rehabilitation program like the one Truman requires after a student commits a drug offense involving illegal substances is part of the criteria for regaining eligibility for federal aid, according to an amendment in title IV of the Higher Education Act that went into effect in 2000.

"The scholarship that I have kept four years now is A+, and drug offenses are not, I guess, considered a reason to lose it," Ryan said.

Ryan has not had to file for federal aid to cover his college expenses but said that even though he understands where the government is coming from, it seems like it violates personal rights to ask whether or not students have been convicted of a drug offense.

"I think that it should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for repeat offenders perhaps," Ryan

said. "I don't think on a first time basis you should lose your scholarships or federal money."

Data the national SSDP chapter received through the Department of Education shows that more than 189,000 applicants have been disqualified nationally since the question was added to the FAFSA form in 2000 because of their responses, including about 2,800 applicants in Missouri.

Lou Ann Gilchrist, dean of student affairs, said it is important that students are active on campus and that she hopes students will be inspired to study the issues in preparation for a bigger decision: who they will vote for in the presidential election next year.

"What you're dealing with is a place where people have broken the law," Gilchrist said. "I think their target is a better one this time if they're going after the legislature and the lawmaking process rather than to ask the University to do something independently of the law because we are a state institution, and we have an obligation to be supportive of the laws of our state."

TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY HOMECOMING PARADE

Saturday, October 27 @ 9:00 a.m.

\$5 entry deadline is Friday, Oct. 12 @ 4 p.m.

\$10 late entry deadline is Monday, Oct. 22 @ 4 p.m.

Entry for parade will not be accepted or complete until payment and entry form are received in the Center of Student Involvement by the required dates.

No parade entrants after Oct. 22 will be accepted.

If you wish to register for the parade, you can register on-line at homecoming.truman.edu and click on "Parade entry". You can stop by our CSI office on the third floor of the Student Union Building, Room 310 and register in person. CSI Hours are 8 am-5 pm Monday-Friday.

Payment must be received in the CSI office in person or by mail for your entry to be complete:

Truman Homecoming Parade
Center for Student Involvement, SUB 310
100 E. Normal
Kirksville, MO 63501
660-785-4222 (office) • 660-785-7435 (fax)

Make checks payable to: Truman State University



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where there will be on-site collection. Please go to the homecoming.truman.edu to get a list of suggested care package items.

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