

# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

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Des Peres

## Hotel Defeat May Give Pause To Developers

By Tommy Robertson  
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

Des Peres officials say they think the defeat of a proposal to permit construction of hotels in the community will prompt two developers to make major changes in large commercial projects planned for the area. But the officials say they are unsure how future developers will react to the apparent desire of Des Peres' residents to severely restrict large-scale commercial development in the community.

On Monday, the Des Peres Board of Aldermen unanimously rejected a proposal by the Planning Commission to amend the zoning code to permit hotel construction.

Planning Commission Chairman Duane H. Fadness said the board's decision obviously will mean that PIC Investment Corp. must make a decision about its plans for a commercial project on the south side of Manchester Road on the southeast corner of Oge Avenue.

PIC has proposed building a 250-room Sheraton hotel and a five-story office building of 125,000 square feet on the 13-acre site. But the Planning Commission tabled the consideration of the plan Aug. 14 until the Board of Aldermen could decide whether it wanted hotels in Des Peres.

Fadness said the commission technically could bring up the PIC proposal and make a decision on the plan in its current state. But he said commission members will await to see whether the developer withdraws the plans or makes changes in the existing proposal.

"I don't think the developers, at this time, have had a fair time to respond to the action take by the aldermen," Fadness said.

William A. Ratteree, chairman of PIC, and Michael S. Ratteree, president of the firm, could not be reached for comment.

Fadness said he also had heard speculation that the May Co. in October would give the commission plans for a proposal to expand the West County Shopping Center. But he said he had not received any formal communication from May Co., which owns the shopping center through its subsidiary, May Centers Inc.

Paragon Group Inc. has signed an with May Co. to act as developer of the West County center. Arid both Paragon and PIC had sent letters to Des Peres officials objecting to the proposed zoning amendment regarding hotels, calling it too restrictive.

The letter from Paragon said May was considering a variety of proposals including shops, office buildings and a hotel. But Jim Abrams, vice president of corporate communications for the May Co., said the firm had not made any decisions about redevelopment plans for the shopping center.

This uncertainty about the scope of future large-scale commercial developments prompted 600 residents of Des Peres to appear at the Monday public hearing to voice opposition to the proposal to allow hotels.

But the residents went a step further by demanding the repeal of a zoning classification that the Bakewell Corp. had used in proposing what would have been the community's first hotel project. The zoning classification gives developers the flexibility to develop large projects under general guidelines set by the Planning Commission.

The zoning classification, called C-4, was viewed by many residents as the opening developers needed to propose projects that would alter the residential character of Des Peres.



Some of the approximately 600 people who gathered at St. Paul's Lutheran School gymnasium, Manchester and Ballas roads, on Monday to protest a proposal to change ordinance to allow hotels in Des Peres.