

Project Along I-270 Splits City Officials

DES PERES

Des Peres city officials may have been leading the opposition to a hotel and office building project at Manchester Road and Interstate 270, but they have hardly been presenting a united front.

Kelley Properties Inc. of Des Peres is planning a 350-room hotel and 172,000 square feet of office space on a 14-acre tract of unincorporated land between Des Peres and I-270.

On Monday, the county Planning Commission approved recommending a zoning change that would allow the project. It would be northeast of Manchester and I-270.

The commission's recommendation will probably be sent to the County Council on Dec. 15. Plans call for petitions and postcards to be presented to council members – petitions and postcards printed by the city.

It involves a small expense – \$90 but was a big issue when the Des Peres Board of Aldermen approved it on 4-2 vote Nov. 24.

First Ward Alderman Mary Jo “Jody” Griggs said: “I am angry that taxpayers’ money is being used for that, because in my ward, there are people for that (project). I can’t believe there are 8,000 people (Des Peres’ population) against this.”

Griggs and 2nd Ward Alderman James K. Lahr voted against the printing appropriation.

Another thorn in the opposition’s side is former Des Peres Mayor William F. Morris, who wrote a long letter to the Planning Commission in favor of the rezoning. “The economic impact this development will have with increased jobs, income revenues and firmer tax base with the resultant spinoffs should be tremendous,” Morris wrote in part.

Current Des Peres Mayor Shirley M. Sweet said she was aware of Morris’ support for the project “That’s why he’s the former mayor,” she commented.

– Jim Dustin