

CITRUS PARK

Citrus Falls Lands Satellite Parking

46-SPACE LOT OK'D OVER OBJECTIONS

By ELIZABETH LEE BROWN
ebrown@tampatrib.com

Dinnertime parking headaches at the new Citrus Falls Commons shopping center on Sheldon Road should get easier with a planned satellite lot for employees.

MTN Sheldon Road Partners got permission Tuesday to build a 46-space parking lot off Sheldon Road, about 500 feet from the shops and restaurants. The half-acre lot will be about 400 feet east of Sheldon at 8733 N. Meadowview Circle and tucked between two homes.

Hillsborough County commissioners voted 4-3 to grant the parking lot, despite objections from two reviewing county planning agencies and a zoning hearing officer.

County planners opposed the petition because it would be inconsistent with the county's comprehensive plan.

The parking lot would intrude into residential neighborhoods by wedging a non-

residential use between two residential lots.

Planners also noted the parking lot would not be contiguous to the shopping center and draw traffic from the commercial development into the residential neighborhood.

Todd Pressman, a planning consultant representing the developers and property owner, said the employee lot will not generate many trips between the parking lot and the shopping plaza. Employees will walk from the lot.

The parking lot is a way to address any perceived parking problem, he said.

"We're trying to avoid that," Pressman said. "We're seeking to pre-empt that in a very responsible way."

The shopping center, on the east side of Sheldon and just south of Citrus Park Drive, is home to a mix of stores and two restaurants, including Harry's and a Mellow Mushroom pizzeria.

As a condition to its rezoning approval, the parking lot will have a white PVC fence and won't have signage.

The board also stipulated

"We're all pro-business, but it's our job, ultimately, to protect neighborhoods and adhere to the code. We don't want to start carving out parking lots in the middle of residential neighborhoods in Hillsborough County."

KATHY CASTOR

County commissioner who voted against allowing a 46-space parking lot between two residential lots off Sheldon Road

that the property's use revert to residential if the landowners receive two code violations.

No residents spoke for or against the petition Tuesday or at a December hearing.

Commissioners Kathy Castor, Thomas Scott and Ronda Storms voted against the rezoning, and commissioners Ken Hagan, Mark Sharpe, Brian Blair and Jim Norman supported it.

Scott said the parking lot

violates the county's comprehensive plan and approving a rezoning where all county planning reviewing agencies opposed it would set a precedent.

Castor agreed that commissioners should uphold the comprehensive plan.

"We're all pro-business, but it's our job, ultimately, to protect neighborhoods and adhere to the code," Castor said. "We don't want to start carving out parking lots in the middle of residential neighborhoods in Hillsborough County."

Hagan was more sympathetic. He said the lack of opposition means residents view it as an improvement.

Blair said he didn't consider a parking lot between two homes an intrusion into a neighborhood. In addition, the property is close to retail uses on Sheldon.

"This is set up perfectly for retail — some day," Blair said. "With that said, we would be doing a service, not a dis-service."

Reporter Elizabeth Lee Brown can be reached at (813) 865-1502.