

Plan for \$100 million cultural mall intrigues, concerns Lauderhill commissioners

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LAUDERHILL * City commissioners on Tuesday said they like the idea of a 31-story, \$100 million cultural mall proposed for the city.

But they also said they worried about whether the complex would succeed, and instructed staff to scrutinize the project and seek other proposals for the property at Sunrise Boulevard and State Road 7 in Lauderhill.

The project, called TapTap City, calls for an 80,000-square-foot cultural and educational area, including a museum for Creole culture, a media library and a performing arts center. Also in the plan is a 26,000-square-foot commercial area for artists, art galleries, a banquet hall, a wellness center, designer boutiques and eateries. There would be 40 apartments and an area set aside for gardens.

Though it is a private enterprise, city commissioners must decide whether to approve the project through permitting and zoning. During a city workshop Tuesday, Lauderhill resident and developer Randolph Voyard and the Village of Creole Cultures Corp., a Florida-based firm that promotes cultural developments, presented the plans.

Voyard said the company wanted, by January, written assurance that the city would begin investigating the project's feasibility, even if it doesn't promise approval. The company wants to begin construction next year and finish by 2009.

Mayor Richard Kaplan said meeting those deadlines seemed unrealistic because getting permit approvals might cause delays. "That's fast in any city process. We can't even say it's doable, but we'll see what we can do," Kaplan said.

Vice Mayor Dale Holness said TapTap City would give Lauderhill a chance to increase its tax base. "It would be foolhardy of us not to explore it," Holness said.

Village of Creole Cultures would buy the four acres from Amera Broward Central, a developer in South Florida and the Caribbean. Amera now owns 10 more acres by State Road 7 and is planning a marketplace of restaurants and stores called Carishoca, or Caribbean showcase, which has been initially approved.

Carishoca is planned next to the 110-acre Central Broward Regional Park, a county park also planned near Sunrise Boulevard and State Road 7.