



Posted on Sun, Aug. 08, 2004

HOLLYWOOD

Some businesses say 441 rules hurt property values

Hollywood officials want to spruce up U.S. 441 with new regulations, but some people say the rules will hurt, not help, their businesses.

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Some property owners aren't thrilled about the changes Hollywood leaders have made to U.S. 441/State Road 7, saying their land could become less valuable.

Last month, commissioners approved zoning changes that would allow new uses such as tuxedo rentals and dinner theaters in some areas and ban uses such as psychic shops in other areas.

Existing businesses along U.S. 441 can keep operating, but if they close for six months or longer and then reopen, they must meet the city's new regulations -- which may not allow for that type of business. The owner would need special permission from the city to reopen the business.

"Nobody is forced to leave," Planning Director Jaye Epstein said. "They can stay there as long as they wish."

In Hollywood, U.S. 441 runs from just north of Griffin Road south to Pembroke Road. That span now has its own zoning district with five subareas.

Attorney Dale Bruschi, who represents the owners of a warehouse and retail center at 5450 State Road 7, said the property would be worth less under the new rules.

Catherine Angella, one of the property owners of 5450 State Road 7, said the measure would hurt her financially. She said a third of the property -- the warehouse portion -- would not meet the new regulations and would make the entire property worth less.

"It's not worth the same amount of money," she said. "It is plain and simple."

Mayor Mara Giulianti disagreed. The regulations "will increase the property values in the area," Giulianti said.

Isa Joseph, who co-owns the Broward Rental Center at 5140 S. State Road 7, said property owners should have been notified individually. Plus, he said, the new rules limit a business' ability to expand -- and that could have an impact on the city's tax base.

Existing businesses which do not meet the city's new guidelines can repair, paint, and plant landscaping but can't add square footage to the nonconforming building.

"I think they are jumping on the casino bandwagon without authenticity," Joseph said, referring to the new Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino near U.S. 441 and Stirling Road.

The complex is one of the reasons Hollywood City Manager Cameron Benson suggested a U.S. 441 moratorium late last year. He said some projects proposed for U.S. 441 didn't complement the city's redevelopment efforts.

Commissioners also lifted the six-month building moratorium on some sections of the road but continued the moratorium until Oct. 21 from north of Griffin Road to just south of Stirling Road, near the new casino.

Mason Sharpe, who owns several retail centers on U.S. 441, said the city should provide grants or incentives to motivate businesses to change.

"If you follow what the city wants, you are going to have vacancies," Sharpe said.

Commissioner Peter Bober said he wouldn't support the measure if he thought it would hurt business owners.

"This is not the end of the world," Bober said. ``You can still do what you do forever."

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