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Managing Editor

A controversial apartment complex in Providence was approved Thursday at the Planning Commission meeting.

Meridian at Providence Trail is to be located next to Maristone Senior Living on Providence Trail, which is behind Target. It is on 14.15 acres and is a mixed use of retail and residential. The developers promised over 5,000 square feet of retail plus a Police Substation on the property so officers would have an area to write reports or store equipment. That would be free for five years at no cost to the city.

The issue was voted down at the last meeting, but came back to the table because the Commissioners did not provide a legal reason that Meridian could not develop the property as they chose because it met all the subdivision regulations which are required by the City.

Commissioner Brian Abston was unhappy with many aspects of the project, and wanted the developers to provide extra money to the schools, police department, fire department and an impact fee.

After a lengthy discussion, Attorney Tom White got up to speak during citizen comments about the legality of the project.

“Despite personal feelings about it, if in fact it meets site plan approval, then legally you have to approve it,” said White.

White asked that the commission refer to City Attorney Gino Marchetti for confirmation of his position.

“As attorney for our planning commission, do you concur with Mr. White’s opinion,” said Commissioner Phil Smartt.

“Mr. White has accurately stated the law as it currently exists,” Marchetti replied.

Chairman Luke Winchester elaborated on the position. Many people were confused why the item came back to the agenda when it was voted down the month before.

Winchester went on to say that even though they are to represent the community, they have to uphold the laws that the city sets forth in the subdivision regulations.

“We could be very much in your favor, in your corner as well,” said Winchester.

When it came to a vote, Abston stood by his negative vote last month, and said the rest of the commission should do the same.

“Vote with me on this and let the guys try to bring the suit,” said Abston. “They’ve got every right to sue us, let them do it.”

Abston made the motion, and it was seconded, but it failed 3-5.

New apartment complex approved for Providence

Tuesday, July 22, 2014

Smartt made the motion for a positive recommendation, which passed 5-3. Abston, Art Giles and Kelly Morgan voted against it.