

SPRING HILL REVITALIZATION

Village plan hits snag

► Compromise sought as design of first planned project, a CVS Pharmacy, clashes with concept

By **KATHY JUMPER**

Real Estate Editor

The Village of Spring Hill's revitalization plan is getting a reality check with the first planned new project in the area — a 13,000-square-foot CVS Pharmacy at the southwest corner of Old Shell Road and McGregor Avenue.

The nonprofit Village of Spring Hill and its 600-plus supporters want to turn Spring Hill into a walkable neighborhood with a business district similar to downtown Fairhope, where shops are close to the sidewalk with parking on the street or at the rear of businesses.

That concept is directly opposite of the plan for a typical CVS building, which is built on the back of the lot with parking spaces in the front or along both sides. Plus, CVS typically would have extra paved space for a drive-through pharmacy.

Zoning hurdles

The village's new master plan — derived through the work of noted town planners Dover, Kohl & Partners of Coral Gables, Fla. — has yet to clear the city's zoning and planning approval process, and the CVS project has yet to gain needed approvals.

To block projects that don't fit the Village's concept, officials with the nonprofit asked the city for a six-month moratorium on new construction in the area.

Last week, City Council member Gina Gregory, whose district includes Spring Hill, postponed action for two weeks in hopes that the CVS developers, The Mitchell Company, and the Village can work out a compromise. A moratorium will be requested "only as a last resort," she added.

Noting that the group has raised about \$1 million, committed time and effort, and gotten hundreds of people to support it, Gregory said, "To have the very first thing come out and built that's totally against what this plan calls for would be a killer."

"I'm hoping each side can come together."

Mitchell plans to present a new site plan and alternate designs for the CVS building to the city in two weeks, according to Don Kelly of Mitchell, which has a contract to buy the corner.

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Wilson, 32, a former sales started in the business, ...

Village plan hits roadblock

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"CVS is conscious of the concerns and is trying to accommodate those," Kelly said. "Hopefully, we can work out a compromise, but there will have to be a compromise by both parties."

The Village will submit its master plan for planning approval immediately, according to Linda St. John,

president of the group. "We'd like for any developer in Spring Hill to have enough community sensitivity to not jeopardize the effectiveness of our plan while we go through the city's approval process."

City attorneys have looked at enforcing a temporary overlay district instead of a moratorium, according to Gregory. The temporary

overlay would address setbacks and parking, she said. Still, that action would have to go through the Mobile Planning Commission and is not a quick process, according to Gregory.

Mayor Sam Jones, Gregory and Council President Reggie Copeland have publicly supported the Village's plan and have said it will be incorporated in a new citywide master plan under development.