

Council agrees to delete 2 landmark sites

By Jan Gilarski

A proposed ordinance designating historical landmarks in Decatur will be brought to the City Council minus two sites which are involved in the Decatur civic center project.

The council informally agreed Monday night to delete Trinity C.M.E. Church, 345 N. Jackson St., and the old Stephen Decatur High School site from the initial list of 210 structures.

While the old high school site at Franklin and Eldorado streets is the property of the Civic Center Board, sale of the church to the board is under negotiation. The church is expected to be razed for a parking lot.

City Manager Leslie T. Allen told council the Civic Center Board is concerned about the impact of designating the church as an historic site.

"If the church is designated as a landmark, it would further complicate negotiations," he said.

"This civic center project is moving along pretty well now. They've had enough problems and they don't need any more."

The civic center will house new city offices, a theater and a combination ice rink-exhibition area.

The city's Historical and Archi-

tectural Sites Commission drafted the proposed ordinance. It was also the commission that last year urged the council to make all possible efforts to preserve the 91-year-old church.

But commission representatives Monday night acknowledged their role is only advisory and that the council has the last say in amending the ordinance.

Speaking of the ordinance, commission member Russ Amdal said, "It is merely a flag to a realtor or a developer that the building or site has value inherent to itself. There are no strings attached to anything."

The Rev. C.L. Hawkins Sr., pastor of Trinity C.M.E., said today he is not bitter about the decision to exclude the church from the ordinance.

"I try to make a point of not being bitter about anything," he said. "I really haven't given it much thought."

While declining to comment specifically about negotiations for the church, Hawkins said his wish is to get the full civic center board to meet with church officers.

Although the ordinance would do nothing more at this point than designate landmarks, at least one councilman Monday night expressed concern about long-range implications.



Leslie T. Allen



Thomas P. Daly

"I don't know if I can go along with 200 sites not knowing about the long term implications," said Councilman Thomas P. Daly, specifically mentioning commercial and industrial buildings "which have long outlived their usefulness."

Allen said similar thoughts have been expressed by other persons since coun-

cil discussed the ordinance at a study session last week.

"I can understand it could certainly complicate negotiations for property," he said. "Some persons believe it won't enhance the property, but it might hinder the sale."

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