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Cape groups debate proposed downtown rules

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A workshop Tuesday concerning Cape Coral's downtown redevelopment took an argumentative turn as officials with two agencies tried to reach common ground on proposed regulations.

Members of the city's Community Redevelopment Agency hosted the evening workshop in hopes of addressing concerns posted by Cape's Planning and Zoning Board about regulations proposed by the CRA for the downtown redevelopment area.

The proposed regulations are designed to govern that 432-acre redevelopment and would set building standards for design and cut red tape. They must go before the city council for its approval before they can go into effect.

The CRA hopes to get a positive recommendation from the zoning board on the proposed regulations. If they don't, the regulations still could go before the city council, but they wouldn't have the stamp of approval that the CRA seeks from the zoning board.

CRA officials are eager to see their plan become reality.

"It is easy to get to this point and find aspects (about the regulations) that don't work, but we are also at the point where we can take the vision and make it happen," said Gary Aubuchon, CRA board member.

"We realize this is not a forever document and there will be tweaks."

Zoning board members at their Sept. 20 meeting are scheduled to make a recommendation to support or reject the proposed regulations. But zoning board member Walter Fluegel says it's not enough time to make an educated decision on them.

"You guys have had this for four years; we've only had it less than a week and you want us to make a decision," he said. "Now that's brass. And you say we are holding up the developers."

Fluegel said he plans to ask for a 30-day continuance so the board can have more time to review the proposed regulations.

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