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Tahquitz Plaza is a collection of office buildings designed in the mid 1970s by architect Hugh Kaptur. The buildings, from 650 to 700 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, are under review for historic designation by the Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board.

## Nexus cancels bid to stop Tahquitz Plaza designation

**By Skip Descant**  
The Desert Sun

For all of the talk Tahquitz Plaza seems to be sparking in the community, the Palm Springs City Council avoided the topic — again.

On Wednesday evening the council did not debate the historical and preservation merits of the four-unit complex of office buildings built in the

mid-1970s by local architect Hugh Kaptur, after Nexus Development, which owns the buildings, dropped its appeal to review the historic value of the buildings.

"The withdrawal letter was received (from) O&M HR, LLC (Nexus) late yesterday," wrote Flinn Fagg, director of Palm Springs Planning Services, in a Wednesday email. "No reason was given for the withdrawal of the

appeal."

Several weeks ago the Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board launched a process to review the site for Class I Historic status, a move that would protect the buildings from demolition.

However, not long after, Nexus appealed that review to the City Council,

Please see NEXUS, 4A

# Nexus

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saying the study is "unwarranted, unnecessary, and an inappropriate use of taxpayer money," according to a June 24 letter from Matthew B. Kaufman, senior vice-president for operations and chief financial officer for Nexus, to Palm Springs City Clerk Jay Thompson.

And last week the city's planning department seemed to be siding with preservationists when it petitioned the City Council to allow the historic review of the site to move forward, according to a city staff report.

Nexus officials did not immediately return a request for comment on Wednesday.

Nexus Development's plans for Tahquitz Plaza have included Aberdeen, a 91-unit mixed-use development, which the Palm Springs Planning Commission turned down, finding it too dense and ill-conceived with its live-work units and other features.

So, two months ago Nexus

appealed that denial to the City Council. Hours before its April 15 meeting, the item was pulled from the agenda because Councilman Rick Hutcheson was ill and unable to attend the meeting.

Earlier in the week, Palm Springs Mayor Steve Pougnet had already told The Desert Sun he would not participate in the vote because of his ongoing business relationship with Richard Meaney, who has served as a principal with Nexus Companies, the development firm behind Aberdeen. Pougnet, who is not seeking reelection, has reiterated he would not participate in votes related to Aberdeen.

With Hutcheson absent and the mayor recusing himself on this item, along with Councilman Chris Mills not in attendance, the council did not have a quorum to decide the Aberdeen appeal.

Pougnet reported in required financial disclosure documents that he worked for a company called Union Abbey in 2013 and 2014, earning more than \$100,000 a year. Meaney formed Union Abbey in 2004

but neither he nor Pougnet have offered details about what the company does.

The next day, Nexus pulled its Aberdeen development application from consideration by the city, along with a request to demolish Tahquitz Plaza. Local preservationists rallied and were able to halt that process.

However, before the end of the day, Nexus had put Aberdeen back in play.

Preservationists followed up with an appeal of the demolition permit. That appeal, will be heard by the city's Building Code Appeals Board.

And then on May 28, Aberdeen was again pulled by its developers as an active project up for consideration by the city.

In mid-June, the Historic Site Preservation Board formally began its review of the site for Class I Historic status for Tahquitz Plaza, placing 120-day stay on demolition.

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