

MSHA, ETSU postpone methadone clinic vote "out of deference"



By News Channel 11 Staff

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ETSU and MSHA say the non-profit clinic will offer comprehensive drug addiction treatment which will include the drug methadone. (Courtesy of ETSU)

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making way for a proposed drug treatment clinic in Gray won't happen Tuesday night.

On Monday, Mountain States Health Alliance and East Tennessee State University announced they asked the City Planning Commission to postpone a vote on a zoning change for Gray Commons.

The health care company and ETSU announced plans to open a drug treatment center where methadone would be prescribed to help addicts recover from opioid addiction.

"ETSU and Mountain States were asked by many of our elected officials and business leaders to take the lead in establishing this service, and we have done so in good faith and with good intentions for our region," the groups said in a joint news release. "Through comments in the media, as well as in public forums, some of our elected officials have agreed with the need for this service and have asked us to consider alternative locations."

ETSU and MSHA said they've considered more than 20 different locations, and they continue to believe the location at Gray Commons is "by far the best location."

But Monday, the agencies said they had decided to let elected officials to identify alternative locations "out of deference."

"If the elected officials who have opposed the Gray location wish for us to consider an alternative location that meets the zoning requirements, is easily accessible to those seeking the service, is appropriately located based on city or county priorities and supported by the data, is financially feasible, and for which they are willing to publicly support and advocate, we will give serious consideration to such a suggestion," they said.

But MSHA and ETSU made it clear they would maintain the final word.

"If we cannot agree on the location, or if we do not have their public support for their proposed new location, we plan to move forward with the Gray Commons location," they said.

"We believe this is a fair approach, and is consistent with our position that we are willing to consider options if they are as good as, or better than, the Gray Commons location."

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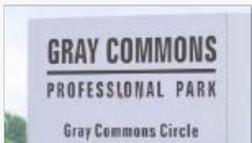
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