

JENKS — Global retail giant Simon Premium Outlets cleared the city of Jenks's final hurdle to proceed with its plan to build a massive new shopping center. The Jenks City Council unanimously approved changing a tract zoned for agriculture to Riverfront Tourist Commercial to accommodate the Tulsa Premium Outlets, clearing the way for permit applications and work to begin. Company officials have said construction of the complex of 80 to 90 retail stores could start next summer and take 12 to 15 months. Mayor Kelly Dunkerley said the vote is a milestone 10 years in the making. — I want to underscore the importance of the collaboration with residents, business partners and the school district in approving the TIF, because the TIF lays the groundwork for this to happen, — Dunkerley told the Tulsa World. The Jenks City Council voted in December 2007 to create a Tax Increment Financing District that would allow developers to install infrastructure in a privately financed — River District. — Subsequently, Jenks voters approved a bond issue in 2013 that is being combined with funding from the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority to spend a total of \$18 million on new access roads, new Creek Turnpike entrance and exit ramps and improved intersections in the area. The approved outlet mall site is due south of the Oklahoma Aquarium. It is bordered on the north by the Creek Turnpike and to the east by the Arkansas River. — We went to voters in 2013 and said we need access to the area, and they approved, and fast-forward to this time and here we are, — Dunkerley said. The Simon Premium Outlets development in the Jenks River District is one of several proposed outlet malls currently being pursued in the Tulsa market. It could end up competing for tenants with other proposed outlet malls, including an east Tulsa development proposed by Horizon Group Properties and another in Catoosa proposed by Woodmont Co. to be located next to the Cherokee Nation's Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa. But Monday's vote in Jenks made the Simon Premium Outlets development the furthest along in the development process, so it is little wonder that a representative from the company said they aren't concerned concerning

themselves with potential competitors. “We have had that situation in other markets. We find locations, pursue developments and our leasing, and don’t worry about what others are doing,” John Dionis, Simon Premium Outlets senior director for development, told the Tulsa World. Just before casting his vote, Councilor Lonnie Sims thanked Simon outlets for choosing Jenks. “We are the fastest-growing city in the state, so we’ve got a lot of new folks we’ve gotta take care of,” he said. In September, Simon announced it was

taking its proposal to the Jenks River District after scrapping its original plan to locate near Tulsa’s Turkey Mountain urban wilderness area amid strong public opposition. Simon Premium Outlets’ nearest outlet mall is in the Dallas suburb of Allen, Texas, and its parent company, Simon Property Group, owns Tulsa’s Woodland Hills Mall. Andrea Eger 918-581-8470 andrea.

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