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October 24, 2005

\$1,862 fee may be added to residential building permits

Zionsville -- A recreation impact fee of \$1,862 could be added to every new residential building permit by next July if the Zionsville Town Council votes to accept a recommendation by the Plan Commission.

Plan Commission members voted 7-0 last week to forward the impact fee proposal to the Town Council with a favorable recommendation. The Town Council historically has followed the recommendations of the Plan Commission.

A report prepared by Mishawaka landscape architecture and planning firm Lehman & Lehman Inc., which was hired to work with the town on impact fees, projected that Zionsville could see 200 to 300 building permits per year for the next 10 years.

The Park and Recreation Board voted 5-0 this month to endorse the plan, which recommended an impact fee of \$1,054 on each residential unit.

Based on projected statistics, Zionsville could have justified an impact fee figure as high as \$3,800, explained Lehman & Lehman president Charles Lehman. He said the \$1,054 came through discussions of the committee working on the plan, which included two local developers.

"Based on their input, they felt that \$800-\$1,200 was adequate and appropriate," Lehman said in response to Plan Commission member David Carr's question as to how the figure was set.

Plan Commission members, however, thought the fee should be higher. The \$1,862 figure is the national average, Lehman said.

"I'm sure the development community would rather pay less than more," Carr said.

The Town Council will hear a first reading of the matter at its November meeting. It could pass an ordinance to enact the fees after a second reading at the December meeting. If passed, the ordinance would go into effect six months later.

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