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South Florida Sun-Sentinel.com

Miramar increases developer permit fees

Builders' fees too low, Miramar says

By Georgia East

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

July 8, 2007

MIRAMAR Developers and private home builders will have to pay much more for building and engineering permits from the city.

The City Commission on Tuesday approved a proposal that almost doubles permit costs for some commercial projects and almost triples them for some housing projects.

City officials said the increases are needed because the current fees have not kept pace with the number of hours it takes staff to inspect and review plans. In addition, Broward County, which the city contracts for certain building inspection services, is charging Miramar more.



"We want to make sure development pays for itself and stands on its own," Assistant City Manager Wazir Ishmael said. "We don't want to unfairly burden the rest of our community."

A developer applying for a building permit for an 150,000-square-foot office building valued at \$14.5 million paid about \$170,300 for a permit. After the changes, that developer would pay about \$238,600, according to a city analysis. A permit for a 3,610-square-foot, single-family house costs \$2,098 and would jump to about \$6,000.

The city's building permit fees last were updated in 2001. Development review fees were increased in 2003.

Ishmael said Miramar re-evaluated its fees to see whether they were in line with those of other cities. It found Pompano Beach is among the cities with the highest fees, and Fort Lauderdale is among cities with the lowest.

Ishmael said the fee increase could speed up the time it takes for developers to get a permit because the city could put more staff on certain projects.

Part of the problem has been that city and county governments have been unable to retain engineers and inspectors, he said.

"It's difficult for the county to attract and retain employees because the private sector was paying so much more," said Ishmael, who also noted that some projects were taking longer to review because of the limited number of inspectors.

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