

CEEDAR CITY REVIEW

Thursday, August 23rd, 2007

ARCHIVES | CLASSIFIED ADS | CONTACT INFO | HELP/FAQ | SITE MAP

Vol. 3 , No. 12 , August 02, 2007

- [HOME](#)
- [LOCAL NEWS](#)
- [PEOPLE IN REVIEW](#)
- [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#)
- [COLUMNISTS](#)
- [CALENDAR](#)
- [PUBLIC FORUMS](#)
- [ADVERTISING INFO](#)
- [CLASSIFIED ADS](#)
- [LOCAL DIRECTORY](#)
- [ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)
- [LOCAL REAL ESTATE](#)
- [LOCAL LINKS](#)
- [SUBSCRIPTIONS](#)
- [CONTACT US](#)

Cedar City Impact Fee Increase A Difficult Issue

By: Cathy Wentz The Cedar City Council voted to increase impact fees about two weeks ago by the entire amount recommended in a recent study done on the subject.

The study was conducted by Lewis, Young, Robertson and Burningham, a Salt Lake City area firm. They recommended that the city's impact fees in each category including water, wastewater, storm drainage, transportation, parks and recreation, fire and police be increased by a total of \$5,356. As a result of the increase, all impact fees, based on a single-family home, would come to \$9,965.

The final vote, based on a motion by Councilor John Westwood to increase the impact fees by the whole amount proposed, was three to two with Councilors Jolene Goff and Dale Brinkerhoff opposed.

Councilor Steve Wood, who voted in favor of the full increase, said he believes people who are already in their homes do not want to subsidize new growth with their property taxes.

"I think it's a fairness issue," Wood said.

He also said the city's property taxes are already among the highest in Utah counties.

Wood said he was opposed to the proposal for phasing in the impact fee increase over a period of three years because the city could lose approximately \$2.5 million, which could not be recouped.

Westwood said his reason for voting in favor of the full impact fee increase was the capital facilities plan. He said either the impact fees had to increase or there would have to be a tax increase on the general population. He also said there had been no impact fee increases for 10 years, so the city is looking at an increase in approximately the same amount they might have been increased over that 10-year period.

"It is up to us to use those fees for infrastructure, parks and recreation, fire and police," Westwood said.

Councilor Jolene Goff said she voted against the motion because she believes since there have been no impact fee increases for 10 years, raising them by 116 percent all at once could be too overwhelming. She said she was not opposed to raising the impact fees, but she favored phasing the increases in over a period of three years.

"It would soften the blow to do it over a three-year period," Goff said.

Wood said the city should never wait another 10 years before examining impact fees. He said that does not mean

[Archive Search](#)



Quick Poll
What is your favorite season in Cedar City?

- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter

[View Results](#)

the fees should be automatically increased on a regular basis because there is a possibility the city could find that it is collecting too much in impact fees at some point.

June Sewing, executive officer for the Iron County Homebuilders Association, said the increase in impact fees would probably not affect those moving into Cedar City from the outside too much. She also said that rate has already slowed considerably.

She said the increase would certainly affect those already living in Cedar City, especially lower income residents.

Sewing referred to a press release by the National Association of Homebuilders that said any increase in government costs in the form of fees being charged adds an even larger increase in the cost of a home. The press release used the hypothetical fee increase of \$819, and said that increase would actually add approximately \$1,000 in "seemingly unrelated costs" to the total cost of a home.

Sewing said those additional costs could be referred to as "soft costs."

She also said the study done on impact fees was based on the current land use plan while the city is in the process of doing a new land use plan.

She said the study took about 1 1/2 years to complete and then the study results were only made available to the public about three weeks before the public hearing. She said if that was the only thing there was to do at that time, the Homebuilders Association could have sat down and analyzed the study in more detail. She also said they had hoped they might at least get a postponement.

"I don't understand the urgency," she said.

Wood said he has a lot of respect for the homebuilding industry and realizes that homebuilders are impacted a lot by the fee increase.

"It is a hard issue," Wood said.



Other Articles from this issue :

[Enoch Celebrates Pioneer Legacy](#)

[Cedar City's July 24 Honors Utah's Heritage](#)

[Parowan City Council Approves Bond Anticipation Note for Sewer Line](#)

[Christmas in July Provides Diverse Merchandise For Shopping in the Sun](#)

[Parowan Councilor Wants 'Hometown Feeling' to Remain](#)

[National 4-H Competition Draws Students to Cedar City](#)