



City Council refocuses on road impact fee proposal

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The Fayetteville City Council passed a resolution Thursday expressing the city's intent to enact road impact fees.

" Well, we had so much fun during the election, I just hated to see it end, " said Ward 4 Alderman Lioneld Jordan, who proposed the resolution, which passed 6-1.

Ward 3 's Bobby Ferrell cast the lone no vote, and Ward 4 's Shirley Lucas was not at the meeting.

Whether the new issue will be decided by council or by public vote has not been decided. Also not decided is what amounts the fees would be, nor how they would be applied.

What has been decided is that the council and city staff want to get as much input as possible before a final decision is made.

The resolution directs city staff to begin working to modify the previous road impact fee ordinance proposal with input from citizens, developers, aldermen, city administration and other interested parties " in an attempt to form consensus on this needed revenue source. "

" I truly hope we can come together and work something out on this, " Jordan said.

Ferrell urged Fayetteville residents to let Jordan and all the council know their opinions about impact fees.

" Don't be shy, " he said.

A road impact fee ballot failed in April with a tie — 2, 015 voters in favor of the fees and 2, 015 against them. A simple majority, one vote more, was needed to pass the fees, which had appeared to have passed until an overseas ballot was counted, creating the tie.

Impact fees are charged on new construction, and in the case of road impact fees they can only be used for roads. They were intended to help cover the cost of projects that add traffic congestion caused by growth, but opponents argued they were too high, were unfair and amounted to double taxation.

" That resolution is just to get us started on the study, and then we'll just see where it takes us, " Jordan said Thursday.

The Ward 4 councilman identified four issues that he said needed to be considered: graduated impact fees, incentives for energy savings construction, competitive commercial rates and factoring off-site improvements into impact fees.

Mayor Dan Coody told Jordan he agreed with those issues but he felt strongly that road impact fees should be decided by a vote of the public.

Jordan's personal preference is a council vote on the matter, though he said he would listen to his peers.

City Attorney Kit Williams, responding to a question from Ward 1 's Brenda Thiel, said state law requires a study but he believed it would be legally defensible to use the existing study as long as the proposed fees were not higher than the study recommendation.

The next steps will have council members and city staff reviewing the earlier study and seeking input.

“ We'll put a committee together, get it done and get it done quick, ” Jordan said.

Asked how quick, he answered, “ Just put it this way: I'll get it done as fast as I can. ”

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