

Chesterton Tribune

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Council enacts park impact fee to take effect in March

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By **KEVIN NEVERS**

Six months from Monday, on March 24, 2008, the Town of Chesterton will begin collecting a recreation impact fee of \$1,171 from the builder of every new house.

At its meeting Monday night, the Town Council voted 5-0 to approve on first reading an ordinance creating the fee and its attendant apparatus, 5-0 to suspend the rule, then 5-0 to approve the ordinance on its final reading.

Charles Lehman of Lehman & Lehman, the town's contracted impact fee consultant, has estimated that a total of \$2.9 million in revenues could be generated, if his projection of the continued growth of Chesterton is anything like accurate: an increase in the population between 2006 and 2016 of around 50 percent, from 12,456 to 18,777, with 2,490 residential building permits issued during that period.

Those revenues, however, may only be used to finance new park and recreational infrastructure and may not be used for daily operations.

The Park Board has endorsed the impact fee on the grounds that funds are badly needed to purchase additional land and develop new park facilities to serve the burgeoning population.

One person who supports the impact fee is Todd Rozycki, Republican candidate for the 4th District seat on the council, who from the floor on Monday praised all of the elected and appointed officials who worked hard to see it enacted. "It's a good move for managing growth," he said. "It's growth paying for growth."

Members did vote 5-0 to approve an additional payment of \$5,000 to Lehman & Lehman to cover the costs of the consultant's time and expense in preparing for, and attending meetings, with the various municipal boards which reviewed the ordinance. Under that ordinance, an amount not to exceed 5 percent of the annual collections of the impact fee will be used to defray the cost incurred by the town in retaining Lehman & Lehman.

The impact fee is due upon issuance of the building permit.

With the construction of Phase I of the Westchester-Liberty Trail slated to begin in late October, the council appointed two persons to represent the town on the statutorily mandated common construction wage committee which is scheduled to meet at 11 a.m. Oct. 1 to establish the schedule of wages to be paid to the workers on the project.

Members voted 5-0 to name Town Engineer Mark O'Dell and Park Board Member Vince Emanuele to sit on that committee. Also sitting on it will be a representative of the AFL-CIO, a representative of the Indiana Department of Labor, and a representative of Porter County, Clerk of Courts Dale Brewer.



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Under state law, any public works project whose estimated cost is expected to exceed \$150,000 requires a meeting of the common construction wage committee.

Phase I of the Westchester-Liberty Trail will extend from Dogwood Park east along the north side of C.R. 1100N to Rose Hill Estates. A state grant in the amount of \$150,000 will defray part of the expense.

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