



Martin County School Board approves lower increase in impact fees

By Kelly Tyko

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STUART — The cost of building a home in Martin County could be going up, but not as much as a previous proposal.

On Tuesday, the Martin County School Board voted 4-1 to approve a proposal that raises school impact fees on new houses by about 22.5 percent, but lowered the fees from what the School Board approved in August. Board vice Chairwoman Nancy Kline cast the dissenting vote.

"It's not really about growth or no growth. It's really about the impact of a student on the system," said Board Chairwoman Laurie Gaylord. "It's not just this year. We will revisit this issue. We adjust with the times. The bottom line is we do have a fiscal responsibility to the residents of this county."

During Tuesday's Martin County Commission meeting, commissioners put off a vote on whether to increase county impact fees until at least until next summer because of the recent housing market slump.

School impact fees were not included in the commission's discussion, though the commission needs to approve school impact fees, which are fees charged to developers to help pay for school construction and projects caused by the growing population.

In August, the School Board approved doubling the fees but was asked by county officials to rethink a proposal to dramatically raise the impact fees on new development because of the uncertainty about property taxes, growth and the economy.

The School Board approved increasing school impact fees on a new 2,000-square-foot house from \$4,555 to \$5,567, which will now go before the County Commission for approval.

Under what the board endorsed in August, the school impact fee on a 2,000-square-foot house would have increased to \$8,680.

Staff writer Hillary Copsey contributed to this report.



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