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# Annapolis firm to map out impact fees Consultant will probe implications of proposed charge for developers

By Pete Beisser  
Staff Writer

Ocean City continued this week to look at a proposed one-time cost developers could see before they begin building in the resort in the near future.

On Tuesday afternoon, town officials unanimously selected a consulting firm that will conduct a full investigation of the implications of impact fees -- a charge that will go to offset the expected continued growth within the resort.

With fees conceivably ranging from \$2,000 to \$8,000 per housing unit, the annual revenue generated from potential fees could be between \$400,000 and \$1.6 million.

According to Town Planner Jesse Houston, the proper fee structure will be computed within the next eight weeks by Municipal & Financial Services Group of Annapolis, Md., which was selected by the town council to conduct the work.

The potential revenue is expected to help pay for building and maintaining town services -- including water, wastewater, recreation, solid waste, police, emergency medical services, fire and town facilities and equipment.

The impact fee analysis will cost the town \$44,500, about \$20,000 more than town staff members had initially proposed to spend.

"We budgeted \$25,000 not knowing how much it was going to cost," Houston said.

That amount may be reduced by utilizing staff for some of the data collection during the study.

MFSG has previously worked with Ocean City on its water and sewer rate study, internal controls reviews and other technical projects.

According to Houston, the study will take eight weeks to complete. The results of the study could be ready to be used in the creation of next year's budget once it's made available to the council.

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Impact fees have been discussed in the resort in past years, but it wasn't until the last round of crafting the town's budget that resort officials decided to officially inquire about the fees. As the council discussed this year's fiscal budget, they agreed it was time to investigate the possibility of implementing a fee.

In September, the mayor and town council discussed the concept of impact fees after another consultant, Tischler & Associates conducted a feasibility study to determine if Ocean City projects would be eligible for impact fee money.

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