

## Anti-impact fee group organizes – Polk Commission Watch - The Lakeland Ledger - Lakeland, FL - Archive

Just in time for Thursday's County Commission work session on impact fees, we have a relatively new Facebook group called [Moratorium on Polk County Impact Fees](#). One of the prime movers is Lakeland lawyer Robert Stanz, who has been lobbying commissioners lately arguing as the Polk County Builders Association has for years, that impact fees stifle development and hurt jobs, the recent building boom when impact fees were levied full tilt with little slowdown in development notwithstanding.

The economy has been a convenient rationalization for cutting or eliminating impact fees, environmental regulations and anything else the development community doesn't like, from what I've read recently. Well, that's politics. It's nothing new, been hearing it for decades.

The current target may be school impact fees. The developers tried this in court and lost. Lobbying the County Commission is probably cheaper than suing the School Board.

Nevertheless, the Polk County School Board may weigh in the issue if it goes south on them when they attend the School Summit in a couple of weeks.

In addition to Stanz, some names you might be more likely to recognize on the group's list are Neil Combee, a former county commissioner, current Swiftmud board member and legislative candidate, and Mike Joachim, a local planning consultant and former senior county planner.

Interestingly, the group has posted copies of a couple of articles about similar efforts elsewhere in the state that contain not only the appeal for the cuts, but the arguments against them.

The counterargument is that the last thing local governments need at a time when their budgets are tanking is another hit in their ability to finance capital projects.

Someone might even look back into history a decade or so and conclude that the super low developer-pleasing impact fees the County Commission levied in the 1980s might have had something to do with the tax increases that everybody has had to pay. Those taxes helped the county to play catchup to subsidize the developers to build the infrastructure that impact fees would have helped to pay for if they had been set at the right level in the first place.

Expect a lively discussion.