



# Bonita lends itself money for roadwork

The Bonita Springs City Council didn't have money in its road impact fee fund last year to widen Bonita Beach Road, so it took \$2.2 million from its general fund.

On Wednesday, the council approved a loan for that amount from the general fund to the road impact fee fund to be reflected in the budget for the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30.

That allows the money to be replaced in future road impact fees, one-time payments collected from developers to increase road capacity.

The money must be used for widening projects.

Once the money is back in the general fund, it can be used for any purpose.

"It provides the council more flexibility on how to handle those funds," City Manager Carl Schwing said.

The council stipulated the loan should not be paid back until the Shangri-la Road extension and West Street widening projects are fully funded.

The city has \$5.1 million of the \$5.3 million needed to extend Shangri-la east to

connect with Imperial Parkway to serve as another east-west road in the city. It expects to receive the rest over the next three years.

The city has \$120,000 of the \$9.4 million needed to widen West Terry Street from two to four lanes. It expects to get about \$1.2 million of that in road impact fees and the rest in gas taxes over three to six years.

The loan has a five-year term but can be extended.

Councilman John Spear said he's asked all the time when Shangri-la is going to be extended.

"We do need to make sure that money stays in that Shangri-la pot, make sure that road gets done," Councilman Steve McIntosh said.

Mayor Ben Nelson said he likes the loan idea.

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"By doing it this way, we have options. If you don't lend the money to yourself, then you can't ever get that money back in there if you need it," he said.

Lisa Pace, the city's finance director, said the loan is a common practice for local governments.

"Our road impact fee collections are exceeding our budgeted amounts and they have for the last couple of years. We really do think that trend will continue," Pace said.

The city anticipates fees from approved developments on Bonita Beach Road west of Interstate 75, including Lowe's at the corner of Old 41.

The loan has a 2.2 percent interest rate estimated at \$107,000 to \$159,000.

Bonita Beach Road is being widened from four to six lanes between Old 41 Road and Lime Street. The county is covering half the cost.

Utility relocations are under way for the project, which is slated to be finished by spring 2013.

"We wanted to come to the construction market at such a time when we could generate a savings," Pace said.

### IN OTHER ACTION

The council unanimously:

- Appointed Frank Liles Jr. to the zoning board.
- Continued Vasari Community Development District hearing to March 7 if necessary. The CDD board sought powers on security and parks and recreation uses, which the City Council granted in the charter as long as they meet zoning and plan permit regulations.
- Asked city staff to research and recommend a proposal about speed limit changes on residential side streets.

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