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Brevard Commission may extend impact-fee moratorium

BY RICK NEALE
FLORIDA TODAY

Since March, Brevard County has suspended \$6 million in transportation impact fees to try to spur new construction, records show.

But 2009 housing starts still plunged to their lowest level since 1975, after the Apollo program ended. And the Space Coast has lost more than 9,000 construction jobs, said Franck Kaiser, CEO of the Home Builders and Contractors Association of Brevard.

"I have queried many of my peers in the commercial and residential industry. And many of them fear they'll be out of business in the next year or two, as many have already gone out of business," Kaiser told the Brevard County Commission last week. "We're just trying to hold on to what we have."

On Tuesday, commissioners will consider extending the county's moratorium on transportation impact fees -- perhaps for another year -- for commercial and residential construction.

The two-year moratorium began March 1, 2009. But according to the ordinance, eligible projects must receive building permits by March 1, 2010, to qualify. So the commission may push this deadline to March 1, 2011, records show.

The fee freeze is effective for new development in unincorporated areas, Cape Canaveral, Cocoa, Cocoa Beach, Grant-Valkaria, Indialantic, Indian Harbour Beach, Malabar, Melbourne Beach, Melbourne Village, Palm Shores, Rockledge, Satellite Beach and West Melbourne.

Commissioners Robin Fisher and Andy Anderson requested the upcoming discussion.

"Just to add to the pain, I know that Titusville just did a moratorium on their impact fees. And there's rumbling that -- and I won't say who -- but there's rumblings that one of the biggest cities in South Brevard may do it," Commissioner Andy Anderson said. "So that'll put the unincorporated area at a strict disadvantage."

Kaiser, who is lobbying for the moratorium, said he does not foresee growth in the Space Coast building industry for the next two years.

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Additional Facts

If you go

The Brevard County Commission meets at 9 a.m. Tuesday in Building C of the Government Center, 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera.

If commissioners decide to extend the impact fee moratorium, the Local Planning Agency will debate a revised ordinance Feb. 22, and the commission will vote Feb. 23.