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Brooksville refuses to cut construction impact fees

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BROOKSVILLE — The City Council voted 3-0 Monday to opt out of Hernando County's plans to roll back impact fees to 2001 levels.

Instead, the council wants to create its own impact fee ordinance and directed assistant city attorney Jennifer Rey to draft a proposal for the board to consider in December.

Saying he feared the County Commission had "opened Pandora's box," Mayor Joe Bernardini criticized the commissioners for cutting residential impact fees from \$9,200 to \$4,848 without sufficient input from Brooksville.

Earlier this month, the commission approved the rollback of the fees, one-time charges on new construction to offset the impact that new growth has on government services. The lower fees for new homes as well as new commercial and industrial construction, take effect Dec. 1 and will remain in place for at least one year.

The action was taken at the urging of the county's building industry with the hopes that it will revive Hernando's stagnant construction sector. Opponents said it would shift the costs of government onto property tax payers, many of whom have already paid higher impact fees in recent years.

Other communities around the state have taken similar actions, but council member Lara Bradburn said that she has seen no evidence that such a measure would boost development.

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