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Building homes to cost more in Martin County

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STUART — It just got even more expensive to build a house in Martin County.

County commissioners voted unanimously Tuesday to raise impact fees on new developments meant to offset the costs that an increasing student population will bring to the School District.

The impact fee rate must be updated every two years, according to the county's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, so the Martin County School Board had a study created by James Nicholas, a consultant and professor at the University of Florida, and had a committee review it.

The school board accepted the new fees March 21.

School Board Chairwoman Lorie Shekailo urged the commission to accept the proposal.

"The longer we wait, the more of a hole we get ourselves into," she said.

The meeting drew comment from the public, with some supporting the fee and others against it.

Kirk Sorenson, a consultant for the Treasure Coast Builders Association, disagreed with the way the fees were calculated.

"The study just doesn't make a lot of economic sense," he said.

One of his concerns with the study was that it did not include commercial development in the developments that pay the fees.

Commissioner Lee Weberman said the commission should approve the new fee schedule as the school board requested.

School board members Laurie Gaylord and Shekailo both said they were happy that the fee change was approved.

The new fees take effect Sept. 25.

The commission also approved the agreement with the school board to help construct sports fields at the David L. Anderson Middle School scheduled to open this fall.

School Impact fee changes

Current New

Homes 800 square feet or below: \$946.79 \$2,939.97

Homes 801 square feet to 1,100 feet: \$1,410.90 \$4,373.66

Homes 1,101 square feet to 2,300 feet: \$1,466.59 \$4,555.13

Homes 2,301 square feet and above: \$1,516.10 \$4,700.32

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