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City approves impact fees

A new, high-end development is one step closer to coming to fruition and two private landowners will be special assessed thousands of dollars after the Dickinson City Commission approved an impact fee program application during a meeting Monday evening at City Hall.

By: [Lisa Anne Call](#), The Dickinson Press

A new, high-end development is one step closer to coming to fruition and two private landowners will be special assessed thousands of dollars after the Dickinson City Commission approved an impact fee program application during a meeting Monday evening at City Hall.

While exact numbers will not be known until construction nears, Dickinson residents Don Mayer and Randy Steffan could face an estimated special assessment of \$45,000 after developers of Painted Canyon Estates, whose future home is in east Dickinson, applied for about \$180,000 in residential impact fees.

The city has a program in which a developer can apply for coverage of up to 50 percent of its development fees, including the cost of water, sewer, curb and gutter and streets.

If the project is completed, it would add 10 residential lots with the total cost of water, sewer, roads and curb and gutter estimated at about \$369,000.

City officials mulled over several options to minimize impacts to the developers, Mayer and Steffan — men who own land that abuts the proposed development.

Cory Haller and Jody Arthaud, developers of Painted Canyon Estates, made offers to Mayer and Steffan to buy their land, but the landowners declined.

Mayer said the city should protect its long-term residents and feels the city should create an ordinance or policy to assist in the situation where a development abuts an already privately owned area.

Mayer said while he is willing to pay some special assessments, he does not want to pay such a “tremendous” amount in specials nor sell his land.

“We do need a better solution to this and I think city staff should be put on it,” Mayer said. “Oil impact is causing this. There’s got to be a fund we can draw from ... to where the city can participate, can use hook-up fees at a later date ... can do something to mitigate the costs in these situations to protect the citizens who’ve paid their dues.

“If the city isn’t going to participate in these things, you’ve put us long-term residents under the fact that ... we can just get hammered in these situations and it’s unfair.”

City Administrator Shawn Kessel said the city anticipates similar situations to occur more frequently with increasing developments.

Arthaud, co-owner of Missouri Basin Well Service in Belfield, said many people want to root themselves in the Dickinson area, but a housing shortage is posing a problem.

“When I hire people I tell them, ‘Dickinson is our last chance for somebody to live in and to make a life in North Dakota. You can’t do it in Williston, you can’t do it in Watford City, you can hardly do it in Minot anymore,’” Arthaud said, adding he believes the area’s oil activity has just begun.

“If we want to send this kind of message out to everybody, that we’re not going to develop Dickinson, then where are these people going to go?” Arthaud said.

City Commissioner Klayton Oltmanns said if the city approves specials and the oil boom goes bust, the city could be left holding the bag, again.

Mayor Dennis Johnson said if the city doesn’t promote development and bring on more of a supply of homes and apartments, rents and prices will continue to increase.

“Everything I read about the energy impact ... is that it’s coming south and Dickinson’s going to be more and more impacted,” Johnson said. “So I’m inclined to help finance as much development as we can to bring as much supply on so hopefully we can mitigate the increases that we’re seeing in existing rental properties.”

With the exception of Oltmanns, all commissioners approved the application.

In other business:

* An application from Armstrong Operating, Inc. to drill an oil well about one mile from the Heart River Golf Course was approved by the commission. City Engineer Shawn Soehren said any oil wells drilled within two miles of city limits require a permit from the city. Drilling has already commenced.

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