



City Considers Contract To Study Impact Fees

*By Lori Harrison-Stone
The Morning News*

ROGERS -- Developers could soon be asked to share more of their profit with the city of Rogers to pay for infrastructure improvement to benefit their developments.

The Rogers City Council will consider a \$38,100 contract with James Duncan and Associates Inc., a consulting firm in Austin, Texas, to study the possible implementation of impact fees in Rogers.

Mayor Steve Womack has said he wants the city to recoup its cost for major infrastructure improvement when development happens after the infrastructure is in place and sometimes is necessary because of the development.

The city's existing requirements force developers to pay for only half of street costs if their property borders the street and improvement is needed. The city pays for improving the other half of the street, but doesn't have a way of getting its money back from development that occurs after the work is done.

Greg Hines, a member of the council and the transportation committee, said the council has questions about the feasibility of impact fees in Rogers, and he supports the planned study.

"This way, we can get the questions answered through a professional company that can do it well," he said.

Hines said he's anxious to see how other cities have handled impact fees and whether they've truly benefited departments that are expected to benefit.

He said that, if the city implements impact fees, it will have to continually monitor the fees and adjust the amount to reflect current costs, etc.

City bond funds keep going to infrastructure needs in southwest Rogers, but the city has maintenance needs elsewhere, Hines said, pointing out one reason he would support a reasonable plan for impact fees.

"Growth necessitates infrastructure. We just need to figure out how to pay for it," Hines said.

Raymond Burns, president of the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber does "not look favorably" on impact fees. But, he said, impact fees will help the city recoup some of the cost of building infrastructure that enhances property value.

Burns said his main concern is that any impact fee program be fairly applied to all development.

"Is it fair that one developer gets a free ride and another developer has to pay? It needs to be fair," he said, adding that he's not sure the chamber will support impact fees in Rogers.