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Commission Majority Cites No Evidence for Impact Fee Moratorium

Published: Monday, August 2, 2010 at 12:01 a.m.

Are three of five county commissioners daft? Or do they think we are? It's hard to draw any other conclusions that don't involve indictments from the July 23 public hearing on impact fees.

The deal was apparently done and three votes were in the can before the hearing even started. Not one shred of evidence was presented to link job growth to elimination of impact fees - not one!

Yet three commissioners waxed eloquent about creating jobs as the excuse for suspending impact fees while ignoring public input.

There are only a couple of possibilities here: They are really not smart enough to understand that they're undoubtedly costing jobs (in road construction, etc.) rather than creating them. Or they have a hidden agenda crafted entirely out of the sunshine.

Who wants to bet that there is already an unannounced project in the mill that will create a few jobs (one that would come with or without impact fees)? Who wants to bet that this project will occur during the moratorium and then be used in November as an excuse to make the moratorium permanent?

What could be lower than a politician who plays on the misfortune of people out of work and economically ruined by the recession to justify an unjustifiable action?

We'll probably never know the real story behind Wednesday's vote. What we do know is that Jean Reed and Randy Wilkinson continue to vote for the public good - and that three votes have set us up for a growing infrastructure bill every day that this moratorium goes on.

Does anybody else remember Bob English's tax increase to pay for years of unbridled growth? Here we go again down the same road.

AL WHITTLE

Lakeland

Three county commissioners passed an impact fee moratorium July 23 targeting very few with a tactic completely ineffective in prior attempts, knowing full well it will cost taxpayers millions. Futilely trying to resurrect the builders, they crucified the rest of us, condemning us similarly as the weight of new infrastructure falls on our backs. This was little more than legalized pick pocketing. Isn't this the definition malfesance?

The result was blatantly pre-emptive. The Polk County Builders Association swaggered in fashionably late, beguiling Lilith leading the way. They sat in the back few rows, mute, smirks on their faces, knowing the outcome.



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What I witnessed reminded me of a Godfather movie. The mafia bosses came simply to show their presence and intimidate, making sure the vote went as planned. When Commissioner Bob English began his literary poltophagy through his typed, response, the PCBA representatives knew they had it, leaving the room prior to his completion, assured of a favorable result.

The hearing would have been more appropriately held at the Polk Theater.

Those voting in favor exhibited nothing less than choreographed, scripted, theatrics. I predict a miraculous flood of purposefully held-back permit applications after Aug. 1.

They wonder why so few show up. Why call them public hearings when only a few listen? It's likened to the lack of presence at the charter review hearings. The same regime was in command.

Come one, come all. Get your red-hot bailout. The County Commission is handing out millions.

The citrus industry should request a property tax moratorium to alleviate the ever-rising cost of disease and freeze damage. Citrus Mutual, where are you?

The hotel and short-term-rental associations should request a bed-tax moratorium because of the 69 percent decline in revenue over the past two years.

GLENN REYNOLDS

Lake Alfred

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