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News

Council denies impact fee suspension

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City Manager Reynolds says fees are an obligation.

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Attorney Terry McDavid, the Lake City Board of Realtors and the Columbia County Builders Association sought a suspension of impact fees Monday night from the Lake City City Council, according to the agenda.

McDavid wanted a 12-month break from impact fees to stimulate the housing industry, he noted in a letter.

"I know that the economic circumstances have placed an adverse impact on local government," stated McDavid's June 27 letter to City Manager Scott Reynolds, "however, I think that the benefits from suspending these impact fees would outweigh the loss in revenue which local government would see for the next 12 months."

The request was denied after Reynolds explained the city is obligated to keep impact fees, because of municipal bonds being sold by the city, which require impact fees as a revenue stream.

Councilman Mike Lee said he thinks it is a question of supply and demand in the housing market now. He wondered aloud whether impact fees would make a difference.

Building more new houses may not be the answer, he said.

Earlier on Monday, County Manager Dale Williams told the Lake City Reporter that the County Commission had considered the idea of suspending impact fees months ago when it was approached. The commissioners said then that they needed something to show impact fees deter local construction, he said. Another question the BOCC had related to what would result from a surge in building permit requests.

Williams said he received McDavid's letter approximately three weeks ago. He shared the information with commissioners. As of late Monday afternoon, no commissioner had asked to put the question on the agenda for discussion again, Williams said.

The City Council also set public hearings to adopt the budget and millage for the coming fiscal year — which begins Oct. 1 — at 7 p.m. Sept. 15 and 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 29.

Among the other matters set before the City Council, was the expressed appreciation of Ben Kinard for the dedication of "Lieutenant Fred Kinard Street." Kinard especially noted his thanks for the



Ben Kinard expresses his appreciation for the dedication of 'Lieutenant Fred Kinard Street.' JEFF M. HARDISON/Lake City Reporter

efforts of Reynolds and Strategic Planning and Marketing Director Nick Harwell.

Kinard said he and Bob Gasche are producing a book of prayers and songs.

Columbia County resident Myron Carter said that since Police Chief Steven Burch is on probation, the city needs a city manager who is brave enough to fire the man. There was no reaction from the three City Council members present.

Vice Mayor John Robertson led the meeting because Mayor Stephen Witt was absent, as was Councilman George Ward. They were at a state conference related to municipal airports, according to City Clerk Audrey Sikes.

Joining Robertson and Lee was Councilman Eugene Jefferson.

In other news from the City Council meeting on Monday night, the council approved payment of:

n \$107,000 for the engineering, construction and material costs to extend the Commerce Drive force main to allow the over-burden flow entering one lift station to be diverted to another lift station.

n \$180 to the law firm of Liles, Gavin, Costantino & George for a zoning matter. This was in reference to Daniel Crapps seeking to change a piece of land at the intersection of Southwest El Prado Avenue, Baya Drive and U.S. Highway 41 from "Residential Single Family-2" to "Commercial General." The city previously paid \$1,555.75 for this ongoing suit.

n \$21,633 to Purvis Gray & Co. for auditors' reports and financial statement for the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, 2007.

n Two invoices totaling \$21,627.64 to Tindale Oliver and Associates for work to determine fire assessments.

n \$1,295 to Tetra Tech HAI of Lexington, Ky., for professional services.

Also by a 3-0 vote, the present Council members adopted the following resolutions:

n To enter into an "agreement number three" with Bailey, Bishop & Lane for a topographical study at a price of \$29,880 relating to the future wastewater treatment facility on land known as the Butler Tract.

n Renamed a street in the Southside Recreational Facility from "SW Ballpark Glen" to be "SW Kuhn Road."

n To enter into a contract with Severn Trent Environmental Services of Texas to provide meter-reading services.

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