



Council may discuss road impact fees in February

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Road impact fees could be the subject of discussion by the Fayetteville City Council as soon as Feb. 7, according to Gary Dumas, director of operations.

Discussion of whether the city should pay a portion of the cost to build Persimmon Street from Shiloh Drive to Ruppel Road brought the subject of impact fees to the fore at Tuesday's City Council meeting. "This just makes me passionately livid for impact fees because if we had them, this would all be a moot point. We'd be collecting that money and figuring out how to spend it," Ward 2 Alderman Don Marr said as the council discussed the Persimmon Street issue.

In November, the council approved impact fees for fire and police. It was reported then that if the road fees are based on developers' continued donation of rights of way to the city, the fees would be \$3,443 per singlefamily dwelling unit; \$2,386 per multifamily unit; and \$4,643 per 1,000 square feet of retail/commercial development.

Marr said Wednesday that use of the per-unit impact fees levels the playing field so that developers contribute equally to road construction. "I think growth pays for itself in the impact fee," he said. "It makes it completely equal for everyone, regardless of whether your land fronts on the Master Street Plan or not."

Currently, fees are based on how much frontage a development has on the Master Street Plan for that road. "So instead of it being the luck of the draw on where the Master Street Plan runs through the property, it is the number of units you are building, how they impact the city," Marr said.

The council has been learning about, studying and adopting impact fees since 2001. The city also has water and sewer impact fees. "This last one, the road impact fee, is something that has been discussed by council for more than a year," Dumas said.

Ward 4 Alderman Lioneld Jordan said the nice thing about impact fees is that they can be used more

than one way. At the end of the Persimmon Street discussion, he directed city staff to put the issue before the council as quickly as possible.

Jordan said the fees could be used to reduce the size of a bond issue or could be used to pay a bond loan sooner or directly on the roads. They must be directed for roads. "With the infrastructure needs we have in this city, there's a couple ways we can get it. One, we can charge a fee to individuals that's causing the impact on the city or we have to go back to the long-term residents and charge more taxes," he said.

Jordan favors the impact fee option. "My point of view is, that way the charges get charged to the individual that's causing the impact on the city instead of going back to the old residents and saying, 'Well, we need more taxes,'" he said.

Dumas said Wednesday that the council should have the latest re-evaluation of the Duncan Associates report on the road impact fees at the Feb. 7 meeting.

City Attorney Kit Williams said that after aldermen have reviewed the recommendation, they will decide whether to accept it. Once the council has adopted the impact fee report, he will prepare an ordinance based on their decision. "The impact fee is sort of a pay-as-you-go type thing — it's a go-as-you-grow," James Duncan, a consultant for Duncan Associates, told the council in 2001.

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