

County impact fee debate to continue – Polk Commission Watch - The Lakeland Ledger - Lakeland, FL - Archive

Earlier this month the County Commission heard from the Polk County Builders Association criticizing impact fees and other ideas they thought were impediments to development, claiming they had no real basis.

On Wednesday commissioners will hear what will likely be an alternative view from David Hupp of Polk County Bipartisans, who is also a member of the Impact Fee Advisory Committee.

Meanwhile, the anti-impact fee campaign is continuing.

The latest is a two-page letter to commissioners from Gene Ready, a Lakeland real estate agent, a member of the Polk County Planning Commission, a former legislator and brother of the late Royce Ready, a former county commissioner.

Ready advocates rolling back impact fees to the 1999 level, which was when the County Commission belatedly fixed impact fees at the level that would raise enough money to actually build roads etc. to cope with growth.

The premise, of course, is that gutting impact fees would aid the unemployment rate in the construction industry that has come after the housing bubble burst.

What's missing from Ready's Laffer curve-like request is any shred of data and analysis that actually offers proof that lowering impact fees will spur new home construction or that increasing the housing inventory will help an already saturated housing market with thousands of unsold homes will help anything.

Other counties have bought that line, though, and some Polk commissioners may be impressionable enough to consider it, especially when it's the only side of the story most of them ever hear.