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av 25. 2005

Holds Town Hall Meeting

about development and traffic, balk at officials' plans to

en

County commissioners took their proposed tax-increase Tuesday night with a town hall meeting at Lake Gibson High

ed about traffic and lamented the loss of groves to ey got a little testy when Commissioner Bob English tried to ould increase property taxes for residents outside Polk's cities of assessed value.

rang out from the crowd of about 200 people.

the growth" and others "That's your problem, not ours."

gh, calming the audience members by telling them that the only er decrease would be by improving the county's quality of life ve businesses.

n the county," English said. "We can't just let things go ... Our "umbling. Our county roads are crumbling . . . "

to investing in our county or we're going downhill. We can't ay for past failures."

al is just one of the methods commissioners will be considering pact fees will also be on the table soon, as will the possibility of mwater utility fee.

bout cars speeding through neighborhoods, low water ash pickup, several residents scolded commissioners for not considered to be runaway growth.

y here, as I was growing up there were orange groves (all nd bird hunting. Money isn't going to fix the problem," said

d the commissioners to "say no" the next time someone asked t in another development.

He warned that if they didn't, the county risked losing its identity and said it might as well forget about the reason for the "natural resources" display the county had erected behind the podium.





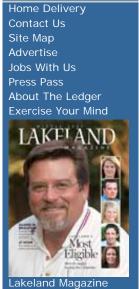




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THE LEDGER

Still, the talk kept coming back to taxes. David Pontes, 56, was one of the most forceful opponents of the latest plan to solve a \$581.7 million shortfall.

He called the idea "political suicide."

"This should have have been voter-mandated, these taxes," Pontes said.

"I voted these people in there, and I'm going to vote them out," he said. "They've overstepped their boundaries. It's taxation without representation."

Diane Lacey Allen can be reached at diane.allen@theledger.com or 863-802-7514.



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