



County refunds \$85,000 in fees

By Ryan Smith, News-Leader

The Nassau County Commission has approved the refund of more than \$85,000 in impact fees to a local developer.

The commission agreed to refund \$85,812 to Blackrock Crossing, LLC, owner of the Eagle's Crossing shopping center on the corner of A1A and Blackrock Road, at its Oct. 26 meeting.

Impact fees, which are collected from developers to pay for new growth, are usually refunded because they have not been spent within a certain time frame. That's not the case here, however, according to County Coordinator Ed Sealover.

"It wasn't one of these issues that it was old and it didn't get spent," he said Thursday. "... They were entitled to a refund because they had paid more than was required for the project."

Blackrock Crossing entered into a development agreement with the county in November 2008 and paid \$201,000 toward intersection improvements at Blackrock Road and A1A. In addition, the company was required by the Florida Department of Transportation to construct turn lanes at the intersection. The developer requested an impact fee refund because of the FDOT-required expenditures.

Part of the reason for the refund was an agreement by the developer to pay for road improvements, Sealover said. However, those improvements may be a long time coming.

"When (the shopping center) is 60 percent filled - which could be a long time considering the economic conditions - a stoplight has to go up at that road," he said.

Impact fees ordinarily are eligible to be refunded if the county has not spent them within six years. Nassau County historically has had a difficult time navigating the complex web of bureaucracy required to approve impact fee projects. In recent months, however, several such projects - all related to road improvement - have been green-lighted.

"It's always a disappointment when a situation like this (refund) arises," Commissioner Mike Boyle said Thursday. "However, we are now fully engaged in a program that will allow us to use impact fees in a timely manner.

"Prior to this initiative, the board had not been able to meet all of the legal standards required for the expenditure of impact fees," he added. "Hopefully those days are behind us."

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