

# CABOT Star-Herald

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## Decision made to phase-in impact fees

*By Hannah Farmer*  
Staff Writer

The follow-up meeting of the stakeholders' committee ended up being more successful than the previous meeting on May 22, with actual recommendations to give the City Council on the adoption of the impact fees. Mayor Mickey "Stubby" Stumbaugh said that after the fees were adopted they would not be put into effect until 90 days after the adoption.

The meeting went fine until Carol Steen, a Cabot citizen on the stakeholders' committee, raised some disagreement.

"I disagree with the whole premise of this idea because this amount is too small," said Steen. "I support the 100 percent impact fee amount."

Stumbaugh said that 100 percent is too much for the city to pay all at once. He recommended that at the beginning of the establishment of a development the city asked for 25 percent of the parks, wastewater and roads; the fire fee will stay at 100 percent as decided in the last meeting. Then after these fees have been effective for 12 months, the city will add 25 percent more in order to make the fee total 50 percent of what Duncan and Associates originally recommended.

Stumbaugh said that any amount the city decides on is fine. Duncan and Associates were only giving suggestions and the maximum amounts according to the size or occupancy of the different dwellings of a town.

"I am just saying, let new development pay for new development, development can't be free," said Steen. "Cabot is not unique enough to justify the lowest percentage and expect the citizen and taxpayer to pick up the other end of the development of the city."

She said that every other city that has adopted these impact fees has gone straight for the 100 percent on all of the categories; parks, roads, wastewater and fire.

However, the rest of the committee did not agree with Steen on this point. They said that the city could not handle the full 100 percent all at one time. Eddie Joe Williams said it is like throwing the businesses, especially the homebuilders in this town, into the deep end of a pool and expecting them to know how to swim.

Cabot Homebuilders Association representative Danya Utley said that she is not completely against the adoption of impact fees, but she does not want them at the full 100 percent from the beginning. Stumbaugh said that this step is the first of many eventually to get the city up to the full 100 percent impact fee.

"I'm not completely against impact fees, something needs to be done, but it needs to be done where the fees impact and affect everyone," said Utley. Utley is not concerned about the fee itself because when the house is actually sold, the new owner will pay the fee in the actual price of the house, which will reimburse the builders. The thing that concerned Utley was where the money was going to come from in order for them to go ahead and build and get it back later. That is why she was in favor of the 25 percent suggestion rather than the full 100 percent. Utley proposed that the second 25 percent fee be paid by the homeowner upon the receipt of certificate of occupancy



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which was agreed upon by everyone on the committee.

Then Bill Thompson made a motion to recommend adopting the 25 percent impact fee suggestion and then after the first year collecting the other 25 percent to make it half of the total amount recommended in the study done. Utley seconded the motion, which carried with only one opposed.

The other decision, that needed to be made, was whether to put the library and the extension that is badly needed be put on with the impact fees. Williams made the motion to recommend the addition of the library into the impact fees to present to the City Council, which Stumbaugh seconded and the motion carried with one opposing.

Stumbaugh said, "Change is something that is sometimes scary to people." However, he also stressed that something should be done in order to make the development of this town better than it is currently.