

For Wednesday, August 24, 2005

Local News

DeKalb Council likes impact fee hike**Council discusses several aspects on the future of housing development in DeKalb, including low-income housing**By **Diane Strand***The MidWeek*

The DeKalb City Council was generally pleased with the staff's proposed tripling of impact fees plus numerous residential guidelines for new annexations. The presentations were made with members of the school district and business association in the audience.

If the recommendations are approved, total fees for DeKalb will increase from the current \$4,709 to \$16,808.

There will be opportunities for input from the builders association and the public at large before the council votes on the proposals at a regular council meeting. However, a clock is ticking—the city's moratorium on new annexations will expire the end of September. City staff have already talked with school district and park board members and received general support.

ADVERTISING

Business Owners & Managers

How do you rank against your competition?

Call the **Daily Chronicle** for details:
756-4841 Ext. 233

A majority of city council members, meeting in a workshop session, also asked for "set asides" for lower income residents. A set-aside requires developers to build a percentage, perhaps 10 percent, of their dwelling units for lower income residents.

When Second Ward alderman Kris Povlsen asked developer Sal Bonnano if such approaches are workable, Bonnano said they are, and he added, "We may show you one."

City Manager Mark Biernacki said, before the start of discussion, "We

should recognize that impact fees, while important, in my view, are a one-time shot in the arm. I feel more important is to develop our neighborhoods into something to be proud of."

Paul Rasmussen, who heads economic development for the city, made a second presentation (the first was for the plan commission) on residential guidelines reported in last week's MidWeek.

Council members expressed support for most of them, including "visit-ability" for persons with disabilities as well as housing for lower income individuals. Rasmussen recommended a deck, a larger garage or other storage space for smaller homes which often lack such space.

Turning to park district needs, he also said, "The park district would like to build another major community park like Hopkins somewhere else in town."

In prefacing his comments on impact fees, Russ Farnum, acting community development director, said they are, in part, answer to the complaint that a developer "sucks out, sucks out, without giving back."

Biernacki said the city must work with Cortland and Malta to make sure one community isn't played against the other. All three communities are part of School District 428, which is overcrowded and which has propelled the proposed impact fee increases.

Advertisements



PostSCRIPT

**Teachers' aid**

New book touts ways to counteract 'what makes new teachers cry'.

Online Features

» [Special Section](#)

Other Features

- [NIU Net](#)
- [2004 Student of the Year](#)
- [On the Links](#)
- [More special sections](#)

More Information

- [About](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Classified Ads](#)
- [Contacts](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Staff](#)
- [Questions/Comments](#)

 LEE ENTERPRISES
Owner of The MidWeek

Biernacki and Rasmussen stressed the standards are not absolute, but rather a way to evaluate proposed annexations. The city manager added, "The council might say, 'You meet only 80 percent of the guidelines but you're OK anyway.'"

When several council members indicated a desire for lower income housing, Biernacki said they would only be affordable for the first buyer, then the price would go up, but Povlsen said a 1,500 square foot home will always be cheaper than a 3,000 square foot home.

Biernacki said, "We'll need to look into models out there (and get back to the council)."

Rasmussen noted that one of the city's guidelines is energy efficiency. "If we have a proposal for an Energy Star home," that will make the unit much more affordable because its operating cost is substantially less." He added that the city needs to be wary of inferior siding quality now being imported.

Povlsen asked about real estate "transfer fees" and if they've ever been collected in DeKalb. "Transfer fees" are paid at the purchase of an existing home in the community. Biernacki said they have not but said he wants to keep the proposal limited to those asking for annexation at this time.

Sixth Ward Alderman David Baker said the impact fees, plus the residential guidelines, which are more expensive, constitute a "double whammy" for developers. "We must have Cortland and Malta on board," Baker stressed.

When Gorski asked, "How do we ensure that they won't change their minds?" Biernacki said, "An intergovernmental agreement."

Section Features

- [Births](#)
- [Government Calendar](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Police News](#)
- [Town Crier](#)



- [Town Crier](#)
Listing of upcoming local events.



- [Movie Reviews](#)
MidWeek entertainment reporters critique.



- [Food Recipes](#)
Recipes submitted by fellow readers.



- [Music Reviews](#)
Reviews of popular music releases.

Copyright © 2005 The MidWeek, Inc. All rights reserved.