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Delavan commission amends master plan to include fire facilities study

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By Sue Yanny
Gazette Staff

DELAVAN-The plan commission voted unanimously Monday in favor of a plan that would allow the city to collect an impact fee on new construction to pay for a new fire station.

Now it's up to the city council to see if it wants to follow suit.

The amendment would allow the city to impose an impact fee on future development to help pay for a new \$2.4 million fire station.

Commercial, industrial and institutional development, for example, would be assessed a fee of 18 cents per square foot. One- and two-family units would be assessed \$576 per unit. Multi-family units would be assessed \$78 per square foot.

The vote Monday night only opened the door for the possibility of impact fees. Imposing fees would require future votes by the plan commission and by the city council.

The city isn't planning to build a new fire station immediately, said Mayor Mel Nieuwenhuis, who chairs the plan commission. But he recommended the city start collecting the impact fee and build a fund before thinking about construction.

"I think this is part of smart planning," he said.

Vandewalle & Associates in Madison recently conducted a fire facilities study for the city, evaluating its existing fire station and looking at some proposed sites for a new one.

Dustin Wolff, an associate planner at Vandewalle & Associates, said a new station is needed because the city is growing rapidly.

"The existing facility doesn't function very well," said Wolff.

Wolff suggested the city think about building a new station on

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property it owns on Ann Street, close to the existing station on South Seventh Street in the middle of the city. It also should consider building a satellite station on the west side, he said.

Wolff also suggested that the city consider imposing an impact fee on future industrial, commercial, institutional and residential development, estimating that it would pay about two-thirds of the cost of the new station.

Existing development would pay for about one-third, he said.

City resident Barbara Shreves asked the plan commission if there is any possibility of combining fire and rescue services with the town of Delavan or the village of Darien.

The city of Delavan and the town of Delavan discussed consolidating services, but the discussions "never really took hold," Delavan Fire Chief Neill Flood said.


Alderman Ron Siedelmann suggested it might be a good time to resume consolidation talks with town of Delavan officials because they are currently considering a 2,000-acre residential and commercial development proposed by Shodeen Construction of Geneva, Ill.

Town officials have said the development is expected to increase the town's population from 4,800 to between 15,000 and 20,000.

However, Nieuwenhuis said the plan commission should approve the amendment and not pursue further discussions with town of Delavan officials.

"We can be concerned about the town of Delavan, but we have to take care of our own area first," he said.

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