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# Developer urges flexibility on Snow Hill impact fees

## Mayor and council urged to reduce town charges for lower-priced homes

By Bill Kerbin  
Staff Writer

SNOW HILL -- Snow Hill officials were urged to be flexible on the impact fees charged by the town for new developments.

In a mayor and council work session dominated by discussion on town fees and assessments on Tuesday afternoon, a local developer said the current \$10,000 impact fees charged by the town were too high for houses at the lower end of the price scale.

Scott Arterburn, principal of the Rainmaker Group that is developing a 51 lot parcel off Washington Street, said fees in other Maryland jurisdictions as a percentage of the price of the home ranged between 0.9 percent and 3.3 percent. Snow Hill's present fee is 6 percent of a home costing \$165,000.

He suggested a new formula under which the building permit fee would be multiplied 12 times to come up with the water and sewer impact fee. The higher priced houses would still pay the \$10,000, but houses in the \$137,000 range would pay only about \$4,900, he said.

Mayor Stephen Mathews said that while flexibility was a possibility, there was a problem with a failing system in the town. He said EDUs or equivalent dwelling units for sewer hookups will become a precious commodity.

"We will have to build a new plant or add on" to the present plant, he said. He also said that people in lower priced houses would possibly use as much water and sewer as the ones in the high-end houses.

He added that the town has worked the \$10,000 fees into its next year's budget and "I don't know if it can be amended in time."

Kelly Brewington, town manager, added that there is the issue of repairing the town's lines running under the streets. There will be an additional cost for that work.

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Gene and Mike Dunn, who are planning a 26 lot subdivision, also off Washington Street, told the council they had started their planning when the old fee -- \$2,200 -- was in effect and said they thought that they should be charged at that rate. They said that they were held up because of the work on the town's comprehensive plan.

Mathews asked when they planned to be ready to ask for building permits and was told the Dunns hoped to be finished in March.

The mayor said that they would have to take a look at the situation but made no promises.

The issue of annexation of property on the other side of the Pocumoke River was also discussed.

B. Randall Coates, speaking for owner Reggie Mariner, said that they where requesting consideration of two parcels of land. The first one was the cannery property just on the other side of the river bridge, which Coates said was contiguous with the town. The property goes to the middle of the river and the town's limits also go to the middle of the river.

The second one, the Wilkerson farm, is also thought to be contiguous, he said.

Coates said that that they were seeking guidance of the town before proceeding.

Mathews suggested that the applicants work out engineering and other details and then come back.

However, Coates said that they wanted an indication from the town if it could go forward before any extensive planning is completed.

Council members said they should be able to study the issue before making a decision.

Coates then asked if there was any opposition to the concept of the annexation.

Council member Rita Williams said though she had no problem with annexing the area, she was concerned about the flooding on the other side of the river. She said that annexation would make it a town problem.

"A lot has to be worked out," she said.

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