

Flagler County OKs impact fee moratorium, half-cent sales tax

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The Flagler County Commission voted 4-1 Monday to approve an impact fee moratorium that will go into effect Oct. 10 for two years.

In a separate action, commissioners also voted 4-1 to levy a half-cent "Small County" sales tax to help expand the county jail.

Commissioner Alan Peterson cast the dissenting vote on the moratorium while Commissioner Milissa Holland cast the dissenting vote on the sale tax.

The impact fee moratorium approved Monday states that Flagler County has seen a 73 percent reduction in building permit applications in fiscal years 2008 through 2011 when compared with 2004 through 2007. Officials hope the moratorium will help turn things around.

Commission Chairwoman Barbara Revels, during an August workshop, said, "I have listened to testimony from Volusia County, and that permit fees doubled because of this ability to spur economic development."

The Volusia County Council approved a two-year residential impact-fee moratorium last summer to encourage construction.

Flagler County's moratorium will "exempt any complete building permit application" from paying the transportation and parks fees."

The resolution also states "putting citizens back to work is a high priority," and that "the quickest and most effective stimulus that the county can provide is to incentivize new development projects by removing the county-imposed development costs."

Afterwards, commissioners approved the ordinance to levy the half-cent "Small County" sales tax. An optional half-cent sales tax is currently being collected but is set to expire later this year.

Commissioners decided unanimously in July to vote on the matter before the Nov. 16 deadline, which will allow the sales tax to continue without interruption.

Four of five commissioners, a supermajority, were needed for each ordinance Monday for them to be approved.