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## Florence plans new ways to spur downtown development

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### Staff Reports

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The town no longer automatically exempts the downtown area and North Florence from impact fees, but plans to provide other incentives for development.

The Town Council unanimously gave final approval to an ordinance to eliminate the town's impact fee exemption areas at its Jan. 18 meeting. The ordinance was first heard on Jan. 3.

The town has had these exemption areas since 2007 to encourage development. The town will continue to entice development through its new "Town Core Infill Incentive District" and "Florence Town Core Infill Incentive Plan." Infill incentive districts allow for greater flexibility in finding development solutions to unique problems, according to town staff.

The council also approved a resolution allowing the Florence Industrial Development Authority (IDA) to issue up to \$14 million in revenue bonds for the Great Heart Academies and its affiliates.

Great Hearts Academies operates eight charter schools throughout the Phoenix metro area. The funds will be used to acquire and renovate the former Motorola plant at 3102 N. 56th St. in Phoenix.

The town incurs no liability by issuing the bonds; per state law, the risk is borne by Great Hearts Academies and those that buy the bonds. Neither is the town prevented from making other bond issues now or in the future.

The IDA will earn a \$2,500 application fee and a yearly administrative fee. The IDA is estimated to receive \$9,800 for the first year.

"The Florence IDA is quickly becoming the IDA of choice when charter schools seek this type of funding," Town Economic Development Coordinator Scott Powell wrote in a memo to the council. "This will result in more money into the IDA's coffers so they can support historic preservation and other economic development activities. By approving this issue, the town further solidifies itself as a business-friendly place with large investment banks like RBC Capital Markets and Bank of America."

### Call to the public

Rustyn Sherer with the Florence Copper Project invited the council to the project's open house, 6 to 8 p.m. Feb. 24 at the Florence Gardens Clubhouse. Several Curis Resources staff members will be on hand to make a presentation and answer questions.

The company also is giving site tours beginning at 10 a.m. on the third Friday of each months. For more information on a tour, visit [florencecopperproject.com](http://florencecopperproject.com), call Sherer at 520-374-3984 or write to [rustynsherer@curisresources.com](mailto:rustynsherer@curisresources.com).

### Other business

In other business, the council:

- Authorized the purchase of a new police car with equipment from Five Star Ford under state contract.
- Authorized a contract with Baxter Design Group not to exceed \$59,700 to develop a building site for Florence Fire Station 2 and additional municipal buildings, and bring the site out of the flood zone.

The Anthem fire station is currently on a site leased from Pulte Homes. Pulte has advised the town it would like to begin building homes in that area by March of 2013. Pulte has donated a piece of property for a new fire station off Hunt Highway.

- Agreed to recommend in favor of a special event liquor license for the Coolidge-Florence Elks Lodge for a fundraiser for the Pinal County Mounted Posse to be held Feb. 20 at the Whitlow Rodeo Grounds.

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