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lakeland city commission

Impact-Fee Raise to Be Discussed By Lakeland Commission

Officials to begin debate today on increasing parks, recreation fees.

By [Rick Rousos](#)
THE LEDGER

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LAKELAND | City commissioners in Lakeland today are scheduled to hear the first reading of an ordinance that would raise impact fees that would pay for city parks.

With the goal of having development pay for itself, impact fees are paid by the developers of new buildings, who in turn pass on the cost to the building owners.

City officials had wanted to raise impact fees for police, fire and parks and recreation. But Community Development Director Jim Studiale said he and other city officials will settle for just the parks and recreation impact fees being raised.

He said the city is asking for only half the increase recommended by a mandated study.

"I don't want to see us go two years in a row" without raising any impact fees, Studiale said.

Studiale said Polk County's reluctance to increase impact fees should have no bearing on Lakeland. He said county commissioners have traditionally been closer to developers than city commissioners.

If passed, the parks impact fees would go from \$2,707 to \$2,885 for single-family homes, \$2,123 to \$2,242 for apartments and \$1,317 to \$1,391 for manufactured homes.

Whether or not to raise impact fees will be a discussion that plays out for at least another two weeks. If city commissioners approve the first reading of the ordinance today, the second and final reading is tentatively scheduled for July 6.

Commissioner Don Selvage said Friday during an agenda study that he wants to know what people think about impact fees.

"We want to hear from people," Selvage said.

Developer George Lindsey criticized the study, which was done by Tindale-Oliver & Associates.

He said improperly assessing value of city property hikes the amount the city wants to collect in impact fees.

Lindsey said assessing 14 unmarked police cars at a combined \$70,000 when they were confiscated in drug busts and assessing an armored police vehicle at \$350,000 when it was military surplus were prime examples.



Lindsay said the study "doesn't pass the smell test."

Studiale said he would check out Lindsey's complaints.

Mayor Gow Fields said commissioners "should not be involved in the study" but should make policy decisions.

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