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Parkland considers environmental assessment fee

By ARUN SIVASANKARAN

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Parkland Vice Mayor Jared Moskowitz, who has led the city's green initiative, is pushing the envelope again.

At a recent City Commission meeting, Moskowitz proposed a "nominal" environmental assessment fee per household to raise capital that can be used for protecting the environment. The idea is to raise about \$40,000 a year, he said.

"I'm not aware of any other city in the state that is doing something like this," Moskowitz said. "The assessment fee of \$5 per household will offset the environmental impact we have while conducting business. The money can be used for anything from buying hybrid vehicles to preserving native trees."

Moskowitz said he did not expect residents to react negatively to the proposal. "They have supported all our environmental initiatives, and I expect them to do the same this time too. This is something that will help the city in the long run."

Parkland resident Stuart Krantz said he liked the idea of the city taking measures to save the environment. "Jared is trying to do things, but you need a certain amount of money to run a city well. I have all along held that the city should adopt a millage rate of 5.1. If they had not lowered the millage rate from 4.1 to 3.4, they would have had the money to do this. I guess they are more comfortable doing things this way."

The city commission will discuss the proposal once city attorney Andrew Maurodis drafts an ordinance. If it passes, the impact fee will be the latest in the long list of conservation efforts city officials have taken up in the past few months.

The commission recently decided to go paperless and at its last meeting switched to paperless commission agendas. Commissioners take home backup material on memory sticks and review it on computer screens at the meeting.

It is a step in the right direction, Mayor Michael Udine said. "The backup material this week was close to 1,000 pages, and we made many copies. Besides going green, the city is also saving money."



The city has an energy incentive rebate program in place that pays back residents for environmentally conscious decisions such as buying hybrid vehicles and installing low-flow toilets. The commission recently decided to give residents more time to apply for rebates, extending the last date to July 31.

The city's new recycling program has residents using two rollout carts, one for dumping garbage and the other just for recyclables. This gives them freedom to recycle many more items than they could in earlier years. The city also recently passed an ordinance making solar-powered outdoor lighting mandatory for all businesses by 2018. Solar-powered outdoor lighting will be installed in city buildings as well.

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