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City set to charge impact fees

Money to be used build roads, fire facilities

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PORT ORANGE -- Homebuilders and future owners of newly built homes beware: The city is finished talking about tacking a fire and road impact fee to the price of every new home built after Oct. 1.

They're ready to implement it.

After months of discussing it, the City Council tonight could give the first nod toward charging two new impact fees totaling \$1,731 for every new single-family home.

The ordinances up for approval will give the city the right to charge extra for each new home and use the money collected to build more fire facilities and additional roads made necessary by development growth.

The exact amount of each impact fee will be approved through resolution in the next few weeks.

"This gives us the legal framework to charge the fee," City Manager Ken Parker said.

Homebuilders have met with city officials to keep the charges down, saying the costs eventually will land on the homeowners and make new homes less affordable.

The Volusia County Homebuilders Association eventually agreed to the proposed \$270-per-home fire impact fee, but plans to fight the suggested road impact fee charge of \$1,461.

Representative Greg Blose has argued the transportation fee shouldn't be charged until a traffic count study is conducted to show the need or a list of the roads that would be improved is provided.

The city plans to use it for growth-related projects only, such as widening roads and adding traffic signals, and the fee is based on the cost of construction, estimated at \$1.68 million for one lane.

Port Orange wouldn't be the only city with a road impact fee.

Volusia County, Edgewater, Deltona, Ormond Beach and Orange City already have one.

Also tonight, the council is scheduled to give final approval for annexation of 46 acres to become the latest phase of homes in Water's Edge on South Williamson Boulevard.

Preliminary approval for the 93-home project wasn't easy.

The Planning Commission denied the project in November, citing traffic concerns and several council members, in March, wanted to put off the project for a year until Volusia County completed its planned widening of the busy road and after the school district built a new elementary school to fix overcrowding at existing schools.

"We have so much growth and so many problems with traffic," Councilman Dennis Kennedy said at the March 22 meeting.

"How can we tell people who already deal with the problems there that we're going to add more homes?"

City staff told the council that the project met minimum requirements and the council, in the end, approved it.

To ease council members' minds, Water's Edge developer Mori Hosseini said in a letter that he would wait to build the phase for two years until the county's improvements are finished.

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