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Portland officials discuss impact fee

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PORTLAND - The city of Portland Board of Mayor and Aldermen discussed impact fees at their recent meeting and plan to reach a decision in two months, according to Mayor Ken Wilbur.

“If you don’t get this funded now, you will have to get a property tax,” resident Wayne Bandy said.

An impact fee is a fee set by the city and charged to developers to pay for the new construction’s impact on city services that in this case are public safety and parks, Alderman Tim Coker said.

According to the formulas that the city is considering, impact fees would be higher on construction of new homes than they would on business and industry.

Alderman Mike Callis, agreed with Bandy that if Portland doesn’t start charging an impact fee, the city will have a “huge” property tax increase.

However, Callis said he is fearful that the impact fee on commercial and industrial businesses, will limit growth.

The board said that Portland has a bargaining chip because they have highway access and other cities don’t.

Coker said that some companies will suggest doing things for the community in lieu of an added fee.

“I don’t remember reading where a city dried up due to an impact fee,” said Coker.

“We can’t afford not to do something like this.”

Bandy said that the people who should be against this impact fee are contractors or realtors.

“You don’t see any here,” said Bandy.

The city will again discuss impact fees at the Feb. 27 finance committee meeting.

In other business, the city hired Brian Horrock as the new water treatment plant operator.

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