



Kane pushes impact plan

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GENEVA – Kane County officials are trying to push a new, triple-sized impact fee ordinance.

During a meeting with the NorthWest News Group’s Editorial Board on Thursday, County Board Chairman Karen McConnaughay, development department head Phil Bus, and transportation Chairman Jan Carlson praised the proposed impact fee rework, which could see public comment as soon as April.

The current impact fee ordinance, which charges building projects for the road wear that the buildings will create, was passed in January 2004. It was heavily criticized for inequalities that would, for example, charge \$156 per dwelling unit in a home near Aurora, but \$1,780 in a home of the same size near Campton Hills.

The rework, yet to go before the board, would rectify those inequalities. The value of the building projects that the fees will fund could almost triple, going from \$425 million under the current plan to \$1.2 billion.

“It’s much more specific,” Bus said of the new plan. “It’s much more in keeping with the intent of the state statute.”

Under the current plan, there are eight service areas. The money collected in an area would be spent in the same area.

The new plan has three areas – the northern county line down to the Canadian National Railway tracks by Stearns Road; the tracks down to Fabyan Parkway and Batavia’s Main Street; and those streets down to the southern county line.

Another change is that the fees would be much higher, but allow greater opportunity for discounts. A project that meets county guidelines for pedestrian and bike friendliness could get up to 70 percent discounts.

The county’s numbers estimate each project would get a 20 percent discount, paying 80 percent of the total impact.

“80 percent is what we feel is rock solid,” Bus said. “It’s defensible. It takes out any of the fudge factor.”

The fees would be phased in over five years.

A project that starts in the first year of the new fees would be charged 32 percent of the full fee. The percentage paid would go up 8 percent every year for five years.

The \$1.2 billion Comprehensive Road Improvement Plan, or CRIP, has garnered criticism, Carlson said.

“One of the criticisms we got from the municipalities is that the CRIP is too ambitious,” he said. “We would never get all these things done.”

The 88 projects in the CRIP include projects throughout the county.

Among the plan’s critics is Sugar Grove Village President Sean Michels.

During recent village finance committee dialogues, Michels said the plan would stop commercial development before it starts.

“We’re just getting to the point of adding commercial,” Michels said. “The rate at which they’re proposing, commercial would stop dead in its tracks.”

Michels has asked the committee to scale back some of the projects included in the \$1.2 billion plan, including the overhaul of the Dauberman Road bridge project and Bliss Road interchange reconstruction.

“Don’t get me wrong, it’s going to be needed, but I don’t think the priority is a top priority at this time,” Michels said.

Sugar Grove was the only municipality to ask for fewer projects on the CRIP, Bus said. St. Charles asked for a third Randall Road lane and the Red Gate bridge to be added, he said.

COMMENTS

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