

Commentary: School Impact Fees



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The Seminole County School Board and ultimately, the Seminole County Commission, needs to get some backbone. They should start charging developers and new homebuyers in this suburban county the appropriate fees for school construction.

Everyone is saying it -- "Raise the fees and spend the money!" Consultants are saying it; the school board's own education advisory committee is saying it -- "Raise the fees and spend the money!"

But no. Seminole County hasn't raised its impact fee in 14 years. It's a paltry \$1,300.

Lake, Orange and Osceola counties are charging \$7,000 and up. Why so cheap in Seminole County? Because they don't want to make the developers mad.

They don't want to hear developers complaining about the increased fees that they will pass on to you, the homebuyer. I'm SOOOORRR--RRRRY. The current cheap fee only brings in \$4 million a year. It's not enough. The County Commission could increase it, IF they had the moxie, but it still would barely scratch the surface.

Get off your wallets in Seminole County and build the schools that are so desperately needed. Triple the current fee, or even quadruple it. Stop worrying about developers and their feelings.

How about worrying about the overcrowding in the county's school system? Or the sorry state of the portable?

Raise the fees and spend the money. This should have been done years ago.

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