




## Impact exemptions debated

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GENEVA – The issue of what, if any, exemptions there should be to a proposed impact fee restructuring became too large for the Committee of the Whole.

The debate about exempting nonprofits, group homes or other type of special developments from the fees dominated the County Board’s Tuesday night meeting, which also was set to discuss the smoking ban, the circuit clerk’s office, health care for the uninsured, and maintaining the sheriff’s vehicle fleet.

Board Chairman Karen McConnaughay said she might set a special board meeting in May just to discuss the issue.

The Impact Fee Advisory Committee will meet Thursday, after which the board has 30 to 60 days to take action on the proposed fees.

“It’s very, very important come the June board meeting that you’re still not having this conversation,” McConnaughay said.

“I really think this issue is serious and significant enough to warrant a special meeting.”

By state statute, impact fees are allowed to make development pay for the wear and tear that it puts on the road system.

The county adopted an ordinance in 2004, but in 2005 began looking at reworking the ordinance.

Consultant Karl D. Fry of Intersect LLC, the county’s consultant on the restructuring, presented a proposed ordinance that kept the existing exemptions of government buildings, public schools and some alterations to existing buildings.

The proposal added exemptions to private schools, affordable housing, and temporary structures such as construction trailers.

Fry called a proposed fee discount plan that would cut fees for developments designed to encourage people to walk or take transit “the first in the state, if not the country.”

Board member Gerry Jones, D-Aurora, said he wanted an additional exemption or fee reduction for nonprofits.

"We as a county should be encouraging the Salvation Armies, the Urban Leagues," Jones said.

However, board member Michael Kenyon, R-South Elgin, said an exemption for nonprofits also would include groups such as the Kane County Farm Bureau, of which Kenyon is a member.

"The farm bureau is a 501(c)3," Kenyon said. "We don't need a reduction."

Board member Thomas Van Cleave, R-Batavia, who works at the Holmstad retirement community, suggested an exemption for nursing homes. Sylvia Leonberger, D-Aurora, suggested an exemption for special-needs developments.

"That impact fee may cause organizations not to move into the county," Leonberger said.

Fry said exemptions based on type of development left room for interpretation.

"Not every project fits into one of these nice, neat categories," he said.

## COMMENTS

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