

Santaquin votes in favor of impact fees

Date: Saturday, June 04 @ 00:00:30

Topic Our Towns

Building a home in Santaquin will now cost about \$700 more.

Santaquin City Council members voted unanimously Tuesday night in favor of an impact fee to help fund a new public safety building.

The fee is a one-time charge levied against new developments.

The cost will be \$694.47 per residential unit and \$.05 per square foot of new commercial buildings, said administrative assistant Shannon Hoffman. Existing property owners would not be affected.

City Manager Stefan Chatwin said the revenue from the impact fee could pay for any public safety improvements required by the city as a result of growth, but could not be used to buy vehicles or equipment or pay salaries. The fee went into effect as soon as the council approved it.

"Anyone who comes in and applies for a building permit will have that new impact fee," he said, adding the fee will apply to all of the more than 2,000 houses in the Summit Ridge development that is being planned. "Every home there would be subject to the impact fee."

Mayor LaDue Scovill spoke in favor of the fee, telling council members and residents this was a fair way to pay for additional services.

"Those who benefit from it are paying for it," he said.

Johnathan Ward of Zions Bank agreed, saying because new developments cause an increased need for services, those who are moving in should have to pay the increased costs.

"A lot of infrastructure needs are driven by growth," Ward said. "The city has the responsibility to manage growth and provide services as they come."

Chatwin said he anticipates the current growth rate of about 5 percent to remain similar or increase, but he said he does not believe the new impact fee will discourage development in Santaquin.

Impact fees for parks, streets and sewer in Santaquin total about \$6,400 for a residential home, which is about average for Utah County, he said.

A public hearing preceded the council's vote. Santaquin resident Rex Bean questioned the need to borrow money for the project during the hearing.

The city has about \$500,000 in federal grants to use toward the new building, said Chatwin, but will need to

borrow the remaining portion of the \$1 million cost of the building.

"Why don't we build a building we can afford?" Bean said. "You'd probably save a lot of money by building a less pretty building."

Chatwin said Wednesday the architect had looked at ways to keep costs down and still comply with safety standards, and the building was being designed for functionality, not aesthetics.

However, since the building will be on Main Street, the city does have a responsibility to maintain a certain level of attractiveness, he said.

In addition, a study was done that found renovating the current building would be at least as expensive as building a new one, Chatwin said.

The city must use its grant money within the next year, or "we lose that essentially," Chatwin said, adding saving money until the city could pay for the project up front was nice, but not feasible.

A decision has not been made on what to do with the old building, he said. Possible uses include storage, using it as a city building, leasing the facility or selling it to developers.

This story appeared in The Daily Herald on page D1.

This article comes from The Daily Herald
<http://www.newutah.com/>

The URL for this story is:
<http://www.newutah.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=56562>