



School Impact Fees Bill Moves Ahead In County

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01/19/2006 SNOW HILL, Md. – In an attempt to accommodate details of projected future growth within the county, the majority of the County Commissioners signed off this week on a bill to impose school impact fees on new residential development, which, if approved, will help fund capital expenditures for public school construction and expansion within the county.

After previously tabling the school impact fee request to amending legislation upon its first introduction over two months ago, county officials revisited a study this week by TischlerBise Fiscal, Economic and Planning Consultants on the development and implementation of impact fees county-wide to offset the impact of future development on area public schools and ultimately decided to move forward in the legislation process.

According to TischlerBise's study, all single-family detached homes would be charged \$5,942; all moderate-intensity multi-family homes would be charged \$2,514 per unit; all higher-intensity multi-family homes would be charged \$355 per unit, and all mobile homes and other residential units would be charged \$3,471.

Most of the commissioners determined that it is in the best interest of the general welfare of the citizens of the county for new residential development to pay its fair share of the burden that new development has and will continue to impose on the area's public school facilities and sanctioned the advancement of the bill to the public hearing stage.

“I would like to put my name on this and have this introduced,” said Commissioner Sonny Bloxom of the bill. Bloxom’s only concern was that the fee schedule may necessitate review more often than every three years, as stated in the details.

Divergently, not all of the commissioners were quite so excited to sign their names on the bill, with Commissioners Tom Cetola and Virgil Shockley expressing slight concerns about the specifics of the payment refunds and Commissioner Bud Church completely refusing to add his name to the document.

“I have a problem with it, and I will not put my name on it,” said Church, who previously expressed concern over the negative effect of impact fees on single-family residents.

Ultimately, the decision this week simply enables legislation to take place and if this bill does, in fact, get approved after the public hearing, it will not take effect until 45 days following the original authorization.

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