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# Somersworth planners mull whether to implement impact fees

SOMERSWORTH — At least one city planner is wondering why in the world the city is waiting to implement some method of collecting impact fees from developers.

Somersworth Vice Planning Board Chairman Russell Timmons said the city is foolish to not get all the money from developers it can through impact fees. These fees, based on a standard formula, are collected from developers to help with the impact the development will have on the surrounding area, including schools.

Timmons said he is "still waiting for somebody to do something with impact fees," saying he would like the City Council to set a number, based on beds or square feet, to implement impact fees.

"Something should be done because we are losing a lot of money," he said.

But in Somersworth, "the Planning Board asked for a dentation to buy kickballs." Timmons sees several potential areas left in the city for growth to continue.

Timmons is not alone in wanting to see these fees, a common practice in many neighboring communities including Dover and Rochester, become a reality.

Planning Board member Francis Vincent would like to see clearly defined impact fees set in "black and white." Now, the city asks builders to donate toward recreation and other areas, but Vincent wonders where the money actually goes. Planning Board Chairman Martin Dumont has strongly supported impact fees and called the current system of forced donations "extortion."

City Manager Bob Belmore said impact fees "need to have a director of development and a planner before I discuss it." Belmore said he also needs to discuss the issue with the council.

Reaction was mixed from councilors about impact fees, ranging from Councilor Mike Micucci's strong support to Councilor Denis Messier's feeling they are unnecessary to Councilor Roger Gagne's feeling he doesn't know enough specifics to formulate a decision at this time.

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