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Commissioner: Freeze commercial impact fees

*BY RICK NEALE
FLORIDA TODAY*

Warning of "impending doom" at Kennedy Space Center, Brevard County Commissioner Andy Anderson wants to slap a moratorium on commercial impact fees.

Anderson, who took office last month, pitched his proposal during Tuesday's Brevard County Commission meeting.

The county charges impact fees on new commercial development for transportation, fire-rescue, emergency medical services and correctional services.

NASA officials estimate that thousands of jobs will be lost when the shuttle program retires in 2010.

"In order to be on the front of this, we have to be attractive to small and large companies. And, quite frankly, small companies suffer more than anybody when it comes to commercial impact fees," he said.

By a 5-0 vote, commissioners directed county staffers to prepare a commercial impact fee report in time for their Jan. 13 meeting.

Commissioner Trudie Infantini -- who campaigned for office on an anti-impact-fee platform -- agreed with Anderson. She said businesses already bear a disproportionate property tax burden.

"Hitting them additionally with an impact fee for trying to provide a business which is going to be available to all the residents of the community, it seems unfair to me," Infantini said.

However, Commissioner Chuck Nelson said he supports impact fees, which the county relies on for construction of Viera and the future St. Johns Heritage Parkway.

Commissioner Robin Fisher asked staffers to study how an impact fee moratorium would affect capital construction projects, such as the widening of Park Avenue in Titusville.

Commissioner Mary Bolin said her primary concern was impact fee ramifications on small businesses, such as beauty shops -- not "the Wal-Marts and the Targets of the world."

In September, citing the slumping economy, former Commissioner Helen Voltz proposed letting developers pay commercial impact fees over a three-year period. No action occurred on the proposal.

Contact Neale at 242-3638 or rneale@floridatoday.com.

Additional Facts

What's next

Brevard County staffers will compile a report on commercial impact fees in time for the

Brevard County Commissioner's Jan. 13 meeting. The meeting begins at 9 a.m. in Building C of the Government Complex, 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera.
