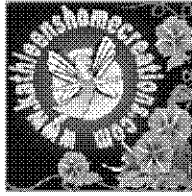


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Council proposes impact fee grace period

Berkeley County Council continues to grapple with continuing troubles at its Water and Sanitation Authority and the issue of whether the public was adequately notified of a proposed 130-percent impact fee increase this summer.

During its Water and Sanitation committee meeting last Monday night, council member Tim Callanan proposed an amendment to a pending ordinance, Bill no. 08-06, that would set rates, charges and penalties for water and sewer services provided by the Water and Sanitation Authority.

The amendment would provide a graceperiod for those residents who connect to water and sewer lines.

The amendment will be proposed during council's Nov. 24 meeting as a means to provide relief to customers who say they were never notified of the impact fee increase.

Callanan wants council to extend the deadline for the impact fees from July 1 to Dec. 8.

Extending the deadline will address the numerous complaints from residents and developers who said they were never told of the increase.

"The proposed amendment will offer a grace period for impact fees allowing customers to pay under the old rate while those who already paid their fees since July 1 will be allowed to request the difference of the costs," Callanan said. "It will also demand that any future fee changes be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation."

Residents contend that the Water and Sanitation Authority did not provide adequate notification of the rate change, a charge that Water and Sanitation disputes.

Because Monday night's reading of the new impact fee ordinance was just the first reading, Callanan held off proposing his amendment until the ordinance's second reading at the Nov. 24 council meeting.

"I want it known that I was against this ordinance from as far back as the budget meetings and I will vote against any ordinance increasing rates and impact fees," said departing council member William Crosby who will be replaced on council by Bob Call in 2009.

The ordinance passed its first reading in committee by a 4-3 vote.

In other business Monday night, the Land Use Committee voted to deny a zoning request by Joe Jacob Development LLC to change the zoning of a tract of land totaling more than three-quarters of an acre off Old Highway 52 from PDMU (Planned Development District) to GC (General Commercial District).

The zoning request sparked the ire of many residents who packed council chambers Monday night to protest the proposed zoning change citing increased traffic, noise and danger.

Recently gunfire had been reported on the proposed property.

"My teenage son was present at that property the night there was gunfire reported," said council member Steve Davis. "If we approve this zoning, changed to general commercial we could subject ourselves to all sorts of trouble."

"I'm sorry, but who knows what the property owners would do with that property then? They could do anything they wanted."

The disputed property falls inside Davis's 8th District.

The company also owns a nearly five-acre tract of land adjacent to the disputed property recently annexed into the town of Moncks Corner.

Originally, council wanted to table the zoning request to look into options it might have regarding the property.

"If we deny this zoning change the owners can merely take their case to the Town of Moncks Corner and request to be annexed into the town limits and we would lose all control over this property," said council member Dennis Fish.



Dan Brown/Independent
 Developer Tamara Haight requested council to change zoning of a three-quarter tract of property on Old Hwy. 52.

OK, Go!

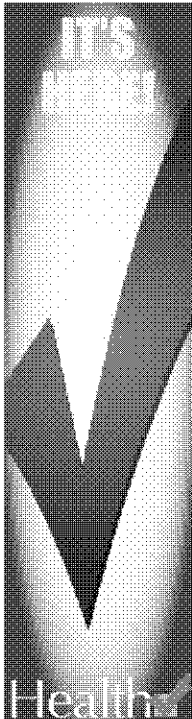
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Residents contend the developer wants to open up a nightclub on the property called Club Upscale and say the club would bring an unwanted element into their residential area.

"If she wants to open up a club," said one resident of owner Tamara Haight who was present at Monday night's council meeting. "Let her open it up in her backyard on Daniel Island, not ours."

The request was denied by a 7-0 vote.

COMMENTS

1 comment(s) found!

Property on Old Hwy. 52 owned by Joe Jacobs Development : 11/19/2008

A property owned by Joe Jacobs Development was annexed into Moncks Corner by the recent annexation. I don't know whether the property mentioned in the article is the same as the one annexed. This should be checked out. If it is now in the Town, it must be rezoned to meet Town zoning requirements. During annexation, attempts to contact Joe Jacobs Development were unsuccessful.

Glenn Batten

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