

## Debating Impact Fees' Necessity

Contributed by Tom Palmer - Posted: January 5, 2009 4:02:06 PM

Well, it didn't take long to turn a consultant presentation on a planned Polk County impact fee study at Monday's agenda study session into another debate over impact fees themselves.

Commission Chairman Sam Johnson said he thought they were something Polk County got along fine without until 1990, when county officials discovered it was another way to raise revenue without raising taxes.

County Manager Mike Herr said it was a political decision the commissioners have to make about how they charge for the costs of growth.

The consultant presented figures that seemed to show that even when one county rolled back impact fees (as was recently suggested on behalf of fellow developers for former County Commissioner Neil Combee) it didn't seem to have much effect on building activity.

Commissioner Randy Wilkinson said it may be that now that the cost of new homes has decreased, the amount of the fees are more noticeable tacked on the cost of a \$120,000 home than they were when the homes were selling for \$300,000.

When the consultant comes back with a recommendation for revised fees in a few months, it's likely the debate will resume.