

Thursday, Dec. 09, 2010

[6 Comments](#)

Franklin Co. commission rebuffs fee tied to schools

By Kristi Pihl, Herald staff writer

PASCO — Franklin County commissioners are not willing to charge builders a fee to raise money for new Pasco school facilities.

Pasco School District officials have been planning to ask Pasco and Franklin County to adopt an "impact fee" on new construction in the district that could be used to provide facilities for new students who come with development.

County commissioners said Wednesday that they think the fee is a bad idea.

The school district's draft capital facilities plan for 2010-16 includes the proposal, with fees of \$6,012 for a single-family home and \$5,272 for a multi-family residence.

The district has struggled to keep up with population growth as its student population has increased by an average of 700 students per year over the last decade.

The district had almost 15,000 students at the beginning of the school year, and expects to reach almost 21,000 students in 2016.

Superintendent Sandra Hill has said the district could fill a new elementary school and middle school today. But the district hasn't scheduled an election for a bond measure to build new schools.

The district's draft capital facilities plan calls for a 750-student elementary school and a 1,250-student middle school. The cost of the elementary school is estimated at \$26.8 million and the middle school at \$60.3 million.

District officials have not said the impact fees would be enough to build those schools, saying they would raise only enough money to help cover the cost of portable classrooms.

Franklin County Commission chairman Brad Peck said Wednesday the commissioners were concerned an impact fee would hurt development in the county.

"It would increase the cost of housing for our residents. It would add significant cost for some families without any cost to others," he said.

While Peck said the county supports the school district's needs, he said the burden needs to be shared across the community and not just be on new development.

The school district has not formally asked the county or city to pass an impact fee, and the Pasco City Council has not discussed it yet.

Hill said in a statement Wednesday that the district was concerned about the commissioners discussing the proposal before the district made a formal request.

"We are confident in the leadership of the county and look forward to providing the full information which will allow our commissioners to weigh all of the facts and make an informed decision about the challenges that face the district," she said.

The school board anticipates voting on the capital facilities plan Tuesday.