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Hebron considers impact fee removal

HEBRON – The Village Board has tabled any action that temporarily could eliminate impact fees for new housing development in the village.

Representatives from Alden-Hebron School District 19, the largest recipient of the fees, attended the meeting Monday to gather information, but Superintendent Debbie Ehlenburg had not formed an opinion about the temporary elimination.

“I will be interested in how the discussions go,” she said.

Impact fees are charged by municipalities and paid by developers to help offset the cost of school and infrastructure burdens before the first year of taxes are paid. Village President Frank Beatty is proposing to do away with the fees for two years.

District 19 Treasurer Pat Syens had expressed concern about the effect that doing away with impact fees would have and has said she hoped the elimination wouldn't be permanent.

The fees in Hebron can cost upward of \$12,000 to \$15,000 a home, depending on the size and type of home being built, Beatty said. The district can use impact fees only to buy land or make capital improvements as a result of a growing student body.

Beatty hoped that the move would stimulate growth and help subsidize a \$4.5 million loan that paid for the sewer and water treatment plant. However, he admitted that ridding the village of impact fees was only part of the solution, and water and sewer fees would rise regardless.

“We're going to need more than just impact fees to subsidize the water [and sewer] treatment plant,” he said. “I think this is the first step in order to get a hold of our financial situation as far as the [water and] sewer plant goes.”

Water and sewer rates could “double or triple” if the plan doesn't move forward, he said, in addition to the 5 percent annual increase planned for the next five years.

Area Realtors also attended the meeting to voice support for eliminating impact fees.

“I don't think ... new housing construction is going to change overnight,” said Conor Brown of the McHenry County Association of Realtors. “You could easily see two years go by quickly. ... This is something they need to continually look at.”

The Village Board could vote when it takes up the matter again at a meeting April 18.

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