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# Polk Commission Watch

County reporter Tom Palmer's blog about commission action and inaction

July 19th, 2010 11:18am

## [Impact fee moratorium in trouble?](#)

by [Tom Palmer](#)

Until last week, it looked as though the County Commission's approval of an impact fee moratorium was a sure thing. Now it's unclear. On Friday, Commissioner Randy Wilkinson said he was having second thoughts about the moratorium. Commissioner Jean Reed has already said she is opposed to the idea. Commissioners Sam Johnson and Ed Smith are firmly in favor of the moratorium. If Wilkinson sides with Reed, that would make Chairman Bob English the swing vote. English told me today he's still struggling with the issue and ...

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July 16th, 2010 11:09am

## [How long will impact fee moratorium last?](#)

by [Tom Palmer](#)

This details of the pending impact fee moratorium the County Commission is poised to consider on Wednesday are getting interesting. Commission Chairman Bob English suggested a nine-month moratorium instead of a one-year moratorium because of the proviso in the county's ordinance that requires a 90-day notice before impact fees are increased, which is what would happen when the moratorium ends. Otherwise, it would become a 15-month moratorium. Another interesting wrinkle involves timing of building permits. Deputy County Attorney Linda McKinley said that anyone who pulls a building ... [Read More »](#)

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July 13th, 2010 08:33pm

## [Impact fee moratorium pushback begins](#)

by [Tom Palmer](#)

The politics is becoming a little more interesting as the County Commission heads for next Wednesday's vote on a one-year impact fee moratorium for everything but school impact fees. Earlier this year, the only voices in the debate appeared to be the Polk County Builders Association, who are perennial opponents of impact fees anyway. What's been happening in the past couple of weeks, though, has been some pushback from the public. Commissioner Ed Smith told me he had someone corner him at the ... [Read More »](#)

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July 12th, 2010 10:01am

## [Cigar factory really is coming down](#)

by [Tom Palmer](#)

I thought there might have been some second thoughts among county officials about the fate of the old cigar factory. The reason I thought this is that I received some e-mails over the weekend from people in favor of preserving the historic building. The e-mails referred to a meeting this week with Elba Cherry who in charge of the Human Services Department, which doesn't really have anything to do with the cigar factory issue because it's being handled by another county government ... [Read More »](#)

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July 9th, 2010 03:55pm

## [If one impact fee cut does no good...](#)

by [Tom Palmer](#)

The County Commission will be considering a one-year moratorium on most impact fees at its July 21 meeting. The ordinance's preambule makes the following points. The County Commission cut its impact fees in half last year. The previous cut didn't stimulate the economy much. There's still plenty of unemployment. Construction has declined and impact fee income is down. So, the best way to stimulate the economy is to get rid of impact fees for a while. If the logic or relevance of those statements escapes you, you ... [Read More »](#)

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July 6th, 2010 03:13pm

## [Developer-backed toll road support group forms](#)

by [Tom Palmer](#)

The Central Polk Parkway's true nature is coming into focus a little earlier than projects of this type usually do. On Thursday a group of local economic development officials and their allies in local government will meet in Haines City to kick off an advocacy campaign to make the road happen. State Rep. John Wood announced the organization of this group last month. The Central Polk Parkway has two elements. One is a link from the Polk Parkway to State Road 60 somewhere in ... [Read More »](#)

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July 6th, 2010 09:55am

## [Polk unveils PR campaign for new garbage plan](#)

by [Tom Palmer](#)

Expect to hear more about the new plan to go to one-day-a-week now that delivery of new containers is only two months away. County Commissioners got a preview Tuesday morning of the publicity campaign that is being developed to make sure Polk's 140,000 garbage customers know what's going on and convincing them it's a good idea. At first blush, it looks as though it's going to be a fun, creative campaign. Also, the \$100,000 campaign will directly confront the issues that residents have raised, ... [Read More »](#)

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July 3rd, 2010 08:25pm

## **[If Polk had tougher rules, it could cost you](#)**

by [Tom Palmer](#)

There was quite a bit of discussion about ethics and rules and other refinements to official behavior recently. Something the Florida Legislature approved this year relates to that. One of the new laws that took effect Thursday authorizes public officials who violate county ordinances "imposing standards of conduct and disclosure requirements" up to \$1,000. This is an extension of an existing state law FS 112.326 that already allows local governments to adopt tougher standards in this area as long as it's not in ... [Read More »](#)

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July 2nd, 2010 08:18am

## **[Cigar factory saga continues](#)**

by [Tom Palmer](#)

It looked as though next Wednesday's County Commission meeting will be more interesting than the draft agenda would indicate. That changed Thursday with Bartow's Historic Architectural Review Board's decision to give the demolition of the old cigar factory building a four-month delay. Preservationists are scheduled to address the County Commission on Wednesday to try once again to persuade them to restore the building. This is a complicated case. The Bartow cigar factory, which was built in 1925, was placed on the National Register ... [Read More »](#)

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June 29th, 2010 12:31pm

## **[First overtime case appeal hearing Wednesday](#)**

by [Tom Palmer](#)

The first of four hearings requested by employees who felt they were wrongly fired last month following an investigation into alleged abuse of overtime. The four employees were accused of getting overtime by reporting damage to county road signs after regular working hours to be able to be called out to repair the signs when they could have fixed the signs during regular working hours. The hearing will offer an opportunity to listen to the accused employees' side of the story. It should ... [Read More »](#)

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Tom Palmer has been covering local government in Polk County since 1974. He has been keeping an eye on county government for more than 25 years and offers his veteran perspective in this blog.

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