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Impact fees halved; but real work lies ahead

Submitted by Robby Douglas on Thu, 01/15/2009 - 9:01pm.

With Video

The county commission on Tuesday lowered impact fees by half. But that's just a start.

The county will be drafting a new regulation that will lower impact fees even further.

For now, commissioners have approved a lower set of fees under the county's current regulation. Gary Maidhof, Director of Development Services, presented commissioners on Tuesday with a revised schedule of fees under the county's current administrative regulation, which he had been asked to do at the commission's Dec. 16 meeting.



County Commissioner Joe Meek speaks about short- and long-term impact fee options.

"The fee schedule, should you choose to adopt it today, will be 75 percent of the original consultant's recommended level for transportation," Maidhof said. "This is a 50 percent reduction of what was already being collected."

The effective date for the lower fees became effective on Wednesday, and anyone who has a permit, but has not picked it up would be assessed the new fee. The change in the impact fee would translate to a savings of about \$3,000 for a single-family home, Maidhof said, and commercial businesses could see savings in the ballpark of 50 percent.

During public comment of the lower impact fees, Randy Clark, President of Citrus County Homebuilders Association, said he felt the savings in the change in impact fees was not enough to encourage growth. "I don't think we've gone far enough," Clark said. "I think we need to do more than what this is." He also said that the rest of the state should not hear a whisper, but a bang, that Citrus County is serious about encouraging growth.

Commissioner Joe Meek said the commission needed to do something short-term to provide some relief. "The ultimate answer and the ultimate problem-solver, I believe, is with a new ordinance," Meek said. "I think this provides some fashion of immediate relief to people trying to either build a house or open a business. And we've got to focus on what the main goal is, and that is making a competitive system for our county."

Commissioner Dennis Damato said that any new regulation would have to take a different approach than the model the county currently uses in its current regulation.

"I think what we have to do when we restructure these fees is look at who's going to pay the fees, can they afford to pay the fees and the delivery of goods and services to people who are here - not the people coming here," Damato said. "How do we target all that and still address capital improvements and all that?"

Commissioner Meek:

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