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Home builders again argue against Osceola school impact fees.

The School Board says its study justifies raising the fees to \$10,441.

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The Home Builders Association of Metro Orlando has cast doubt on impact-fee numbers submitted to the county by the Osceola school district.

In documents shared with school staff, a consultant hired by the group said the district used old data and overestimated student populations as it came up with its numbers.

Using different financial scenarios, a preliminary draft study states school impact fees on a single-family home should range between \$7,845 and \$5,232.

Based on a study finished in June, the school district proposed that the county set the impact fee on a single-family home at \$10,441. Currently, that amount is \$9,981.

The request by the builders caught several School Board members by surprise. They said the group has been kept abreast of impact-fee calculations all along.

"We've advertised this for months . . . and the home builders have been represented at every meeting," board member Thomas Chalifoux Jr. said. "Frankly, I think we've got community buy-in. I don't understand where this person is getting those numbers."

Bill Collins, assistant superintendent for fiscal and business services, said the school district used 2006 data rather than 2007 numbers because that was the most recently available when the district completed its June report.

"We've asked the county to accept the study as it stands," he said last week.

Joseph Volpe, governmental affairs assistant-Osceola County with the Home Builders Association of Metro Orlando, said he was unfamiliar with the consultant's methodology.

Volpe said his group commissioned its study because of the district's "past history."

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The district was sued by the builders group over methodology used to calculate impact fees.

A judge's ruling in September of 2005 had upheld the county's basic methodology used to calculate the impact fee. But in January, a judge lowered impact fee amounts that gave builders credit for revenue received from certificates of participation, which are issued by the School Board but do not require taxpayer approval.

School impact fees are approved by the county and are used to pay for new school construction needed because of population growth.

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