

## Indian River County School Board not against impact fee hike

By Colleen Wixon

Tuesday, February 12, 2008

With an anticipated reduction in state and federal money for building and technology, School Board members think they should reconsider the idea of raising impact fees.

But they still don't like the proposed 72 percent increase suggested by a county consultant last year. Under that proposal, school impact fees would jump from \$1,756 to \$4,459.

Impact fees are one-time charges builders pay local government to pay for expansion of services such as roads or schools needed because of new homes. Last year, a county consultant proposed a 72 percent increase in impact fees because of an increase in the cost of construction since 2005.

School Board Chairman Karen Disney-Brombach said at a board discussion meeting Tuesday she would write the county to say the board is not against raising impact fees, but the board is against the 72 percent increase.

Based on proposed state and federal budgets, there could be a reduction in capital and technology money given to districts, she said to the board.

"We are going to have a revenue crunch similar to what we had in the '90s," Disney-Brombach said.

The county has scheduled a March 6 workshop to discuss the proposed increase. A task force recommended last month the county maintain the current fees.

Disney-Brombach said the board needs to make a decision on impact fees and take a stand before the county workshop.

The district has collected about \$7 million since impact fees were implemented in 2005. The money has been earmarked to pay for the new elementary school, which has been put on hold until after Imagine Schools builds its two new charter schools in the district.

Board member Debbie MacKay said she supported impact fees so growth pays for itself. But board member Ann Reuter said surrounding property values — and property

taxes — go up every time the board raises impact fees.

While Reuter said she believes growth should pay for itself, she said she doesn't support impact fees.

## **IN OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Other issues raised at Tuesday's Indian**

#### **River County School Board meeting:**

- Board Vice Chairman Carol Johnson suggested scheduling a town hall meeting on school finance. Johnson said the meeting should be before the budget workshops begin in the summer so the public feels they have a voice in how the district budget is developed.
- Board member Lenora Quimby discussed the need to unlock the tennis and basketball courts near the Citrus Bowl after school hours to make them available to the public.



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