

Impact fee study on its way

Katharhynn Heidelberg

Daily Press News Editor

MONTROSE — Montrose County Commissioners cleared the way for an impact-fee study Monday, when they signed off on a grant and awarded a bid for the study.

The county was awarded \$37,500 as a Smart Growth grant from the Colorado Heritage Planning Grant Program earlier in the year. The program is administered by the Office of Smart Growth within the Department of Local Affairs.

An impact fee is charged to developers by a governmental entity to help pay for the capital improvements made necessary by the development in question. The Montrose Board of County Commissioners is exploring the option of instituting impact fees to help growth pay its own way.

Monday, the grant agreement came before the commissioners for their signatures, which were supplied despite slight concern over the contract's language of indemnification.

The contract calls on the county to defend the state against lawsuits if any are filed. Under the Taxpayer Bill of Rights in the state constitution, the county can't commit funds beyond one year. Though the contract itself is only for one year, the commissioners wanted it to include the words "if the law allows," but the state would not amend the contract.

The commissioners agreed on Monday to sign off on the deal, but used the words "if the law allows" when speaking the motion to do so.

With step one completed, County Engineer Brian Wilson then asked the commissioners to award the 2007 Impact Fee Implementation Study bid for \$67,650 to RPI Consulting.

In addition to the Smart Growth grant, some of the county's general fund balance will be used to pay for the study.

The consulting firm was one of three vendors that bid on the study project. Proposals were evaluated based on qualifications, developments of study, timeframes, costs, experience, recent work, public participation and several other factors.

"Their overall response was deemed to be the best for Montrose County," Wilson said of RPI.

Patterson agreed, calling RPI's bid "the best value," while Commissioner Gary Ellis liked that RPI would develop specific data.

"I think it's a good proposal," he said.