

The Morning News

Local News for Northwest Arkansas

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Rogers Committee Tables Impact Fee Reduction Proposal

By [John Henley Jr.](#)
THE MORNING NEWS

ROGERS -- There will be no reduced water and sewer service impact fees in Rogers, at least for now.

The Rogers City Council Transportation Committee tabled indefinitely a proposed ordinance establishing lower development impact fees for the Residential Affordable Housing zone.

Under the proposed ordinance, houses of 1,200 square feet or less, which were in the proper zone, would be assessed a fee of \$350 for water service and \$1,100 for sewer service. The fees are currently \$700 for residential water hookup and \$2,200 for residential sewer hookup. The reduction was a move to promote affordable housing in Rogers.

Aldерwoman Betsy Reithemeyer spoke against the proposed ordinance, saying all Rogers residents should pay the same prices on hookup fees.

"If we want to do something for lower income families, then, we need to find some other way to do it," Reithemeyer said.

Bill Burckart is a member of the Northwest Arkansas Home Builders Association and has been building affordable houses for 25 years, he said.

Burckart spoke in favor of doing something for affordable housing, although he admitted he had problems with the proposed ordinance in its present form.

Burckart said the lower fees should not be tied to square footage, nor should the proposal be tied to a single zone within the city. "I think you should have affordable housing throughout the city, not just in one part of it," he said.

Alderman Jim Clark agreed with Burckart that the proposed ordinance in its present form was not satisfactory.

"I don't like the way the ordinance is written. I object to tying the ordinance to zoning," Clark said.

Burckart said his arguing in favor of the proposal is not motivated by profit, pledging that he would donate to the homebuyer's down payment any reduction in impact fees.

Burckart requested he be placed on the agenda for the next council meeting in order that he might request a waiver of impact fees for his subdivision: Veteran's Park.

Ben Lipscomb, Rogers city attorney, and Tom McAlister, superintendent of Rogers Water Utilities, said there is no provision for such a request, and an amendment to the ordinance that established the fees would have to be written and passed to accommodate Burckart's request.

The council also approved moving the city's water service boundary in Lowell to provide service to two Lowell property owners, whose property is within the Springdale water service boundary of Lowell, but who cannot currently connect to Springdale Water Utilities because there are no waterlines in the area.

Buzz Boyer represented Bill Mann at the meeting. Mann owns 40 acres in the northwest corner of Lowell. Mann's property abuts Rogers. Boyer said his client would pay the impact fees for water service.

Daniel Ellis of Crafton, Tull and Associates submitted a request on Charles Reeves' behalf to receive Rogers water service on 56 acres along Pleasant Grove Parkway. Ellis said Reeves would also pay the impact fees.

Both Boyer and Ellis said the Springdale Water Commission has given its approval of the change to the boundary if Lowell and Rogers gave their approval. The Lowell City Council already approved the boundary changes.

In other business, the commission approved a rezoning for Upscale Communities to change 2.3 acres from a residential-office zone to a planned unit development and to rezone 5.12 acres from highway commercial zone to a planned unit development. The properties lie along Myers Ranch Boulevard east of Dodson Road.

The 2.3-acre property will contain a five-story office building and a five-story parking deck. The 5.12-acre property will contain two five-story hotels, one with 122 rooms and the other with 98 rooms.

The commission also granted a rezoning to Maralle Inc. for property at 507 N. Arkansas St. The property was rezoned from highway commercial zone to a highway commercial/condominium unit zone.

There are no plans for the site, said Brad Snyder, who represented Maralle. The request was made so that the units can be sold individually in the future, Snyder said.

AT A GLANCE

Who Provides Lowell With Water, Sewer Service?

Springdale Water Utilities serves the majority of Lowell water and sewer customers. Rogers Water Utilities provides a small percentage of Lowell residents with sewer service. There are areas in Lowell, mostly west of Interstate 540, that are in Springdale's service boundary, but there are no water or sewer lines. Lowell does not receive any of the revenue generated from these services, so it has no financial means by which to construct waterlines in these areas.

Source: Staff Report