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Village balks at road fee proposal

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By Susan DeMar Lafferty, Staff writer

Will County's proposed road impact fee has hit a bump in the road.

New Lenox trustees unanimously approved a resolution Monday night objecting to fees, which they said are "excessive and beyond reason and would significantly deter future economic development."

Mayor Tim Baldermann said the board's action should not be construed as "antagonistic."

"The village has a very good relationship with the county," he said, but the proposed fees are "astronomical."

County officials have said the fees paid by developers would help offset the cost of necessary road improvements. County officials said the proposed impact fee could generate between \$8.5 million and \$9.5 million a year based on 2015 land-use projections.

But Baldermann said the impact fees are not needed because Will County is expected to receive \$19 million annually from the state for road improvements under new legislation.

New Lenox officials said the county's impact fees would be in addition to any road improvements a developer would be required to complete.

According to the county's proposal, fees would be collected and used within six delineated service areas, but not necessarily near the development that is providing the fee.

According to the county's Comprehensive Road Improvement Plan, eligible projects in New Lenox would be Lincoln Highway and Gougar Road, Illinois Highway and Cedar Road, and Laraway and Spencer roads.

Fees would be paid at the time the building permit is issued, but would be refunded to the developer if not used in five years. New Lenox officials said this could create more administrative work for its staff.

Projects that would be exempt from paying fees include schools, churches, and affordable housing.

Developers may also appeal the fee, which could delay projects, according to New Lenox officials.

According to the village's figures, if the impact fees were adopted, Silver Cross Hospital would have to pay \$314,000 if it builds in the village; the Forest City mall developer would pay over \$1 million, and the Cedar Crossings retail center, nearly \$490,000, pending any discounts or credits.

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