

# The Daily Commercial

## City moves ahead with plans to waive impact fees

TAVARES

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Tavares officials moved forward with plans to waive city impact fees for another year.

At Wednesday night's city council meeting, the board approved the holding of public hearings on an ordinance to extend the impact fee waiver program until the end of 2011.

The council voted 4-1 in favor, with Lori Pfister dissenting.

"I was against it last time and I'm still against it," Pfister said.

Pfister said she would have preferred the waiver program be used as an incentive for developers to build "green."

In its consideration of extending the impact fee waivers on all building within the city limits, the council was shown evidence that the program has paid dividends during the current calendar year.

Economic Development Director Bill Neron told the board that permits totaling more than \$31 million had been approved as of Oct. 31, 2010. Neron said that was nearly three times the value of construction from all of 2009.

"The majority of the permits that have been approved were for commercial development," Neron said. "I know there were some concerns when we did this that we were going to have a bunch of new subdivisions, but that has not happened."

Before the impact fee waiver ordinance is approved for another year, Tavares citizens will have two chances to voice their opinion during public hearings to be held in December. But council members got a preview of what the residents were thinking following the preliminary discussion Wednesday.

"If you can tell me that this waiver of impact fees will not adversely affect the citizen in Tavares today, tomorrow, next year, then I would say, 'Yes, waive the fees,'" Tavares resident Norman Hope said.

Developer Tom Hofmeister, who is currently in the process of building the Osprey Lodge health care facility, told the council not extending the program would adversely affect his project.

"We are depending on the decision you made last year to waive those fees," Hofmeister said. "If you don't bring that into next year's system, the financing that we're putting in place right now completely implodes."

In other business at the meeting, council members Robert Wolfe, Bob Grenier and Pfister were all sworn in for new two-year terms. Following the ceremony, the council elected Wolfe to remain as mayor and chose Grenier to serve as the new vice-mayor.

*Friday, November 19, 2010 - [www.dailycommercial.com/111910tavaresimpact](http://www.dailycommercial.com/111910tavaresimpact)*