



County Mulls Reducing Impact Fees

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BROOKSVILLE - County commissioners today will discuss setting a public hearing to consider reducing impact fees by 25 percent for at least 18 months to meet the requirements of the state's recently passed appropriations act for affordable housing.

The act sets aside \$20 million in nonrecurring funds for the next fiscal year, beginning July 1, for a 12-month period.

Nonrecurring means the money will no longer be available after June 30, 2009.

The money comes from the "Sadowski Act" to assist first-time homeowners who meet eligibility requirements.

The top price of a home purchase in Hernando County would be set at \$222,300.

As chairman of the Greater Hernando County Chamber of Commerce's Government Affairs Committee, Morris Porton is spreading the good news of the program and urging the business community to show up today in support.

"It is the chamber's understanding that first-time homebuyers could receive up to \$10,000 in down payment assistance and under the (program) - for new construction - they could receive up to 25 percent with a limit of \$70,000," Morris said in a press release.

"Anything we can do to stimulate our economy is a positive step in the right direction," Porton said.

According to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, the \$20 million appropriated for home-ownership assistance will not be directly appropriated to the various local governments that meet the criteria imposed by the act.

Rather, the money is restricted for use in existing home ownership programs.

"There is no guarantee that the funds will be available for use by Hernando County residents," according to Karin Slater, with the county planning department.

In fact, an impact fee reduction could have a negative impact on the county's capital improvement program and there is no certainty that the program would stimulate new home construction or increase access to home ownership, Slater said.

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