

Impact Fees On Township Commissioners' Minds Tonight

Posted on 22 August 2013. Tags: [Lower Pottsgrove Board of Commissioners](#), [Lower Pottsgrove Planning Commission](#), [traffic impact fees](#)

SANATOGA PA – Experts from Lower Pottsgrove’s traffic and transportation engineering firm, and its community and parks’ planning adviser, will be featured speakers during tonight’s (Thursday, Aug. 22, 2013) meeting of the township Board of Commissioners’ meeting, as board members gather more information on the prospect of instituting a traffic impact fee.

The meeting is scheduled to start an hour earlier than usual, at 6 p.m., in the municipal building, 2199 Buchert Rd., and is open to the public. Commissioners expect to hear from representatives of [Traffic Planning and Design](#), based in Sanatoga, and from Simone Collins, the design company that is helping Lower Pottsgrove coordinate planning, zoning and community appearance efforts with Limerick Township near the Sanatoga interchange of U.S. Route 422.

Creating impact fees was [recommended earlier this year](#) by the Lower Pottsgrove Planning Commission. Relying on research provided by Montgomery County, planners concluded fees would substantially offset added financial burdens of providing police protection, highways and parks maintenance that future development will require.

Without fees, current property owners might be forced to pay increasingly higher taxes to cover costs attributed to their incoming neighbors. A county computerized model suggests that future development unsupplemented by impact fees would cost the township more than it gained in financial benefit. Other townships surrounding Lower Pottsgrove don’t face similar problems, the county noted, because they already levy impact fees.

Impact fees might pay for, among other things, the estimated \$12 million cost of improving approaches to interchange entrance and exit ramps. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation [in June \(2013\) warned it will stop issuing highway occupancy permits](#) for developments that affect the interchange until the upgrades are built. The expense is anticipated to be jointly shared by Lower Pottsgrove and Limerick.

Impact fees have already proven to be a contentious issue among some commissioners, with disagreements raised in recent months over whether they would hinder township efforts to attract commerce and mar its “business-friendly” image.

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