

Pitkin County ponders new way to calculate housing fee

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ASPEN —A new method of calculating the impact fee levied on development in Pitkin County to pay for worker housing is advancing, albeit tentatively, with a nod from county commissioners Tuesday.

Commissioners, with Rachel Richards absent, peppered County Attorney John Ely and Tom McCabe, director of the Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Authority, with questions about the proposed new way of calculating the impact fee. The fee revenues are used to provide worker housing.

Next, Ely said, commissioners will be asked to approve a resolution that directs staffers to come up with a proposed impact fee using the new methodology. The more difficult decision will be deciding on the actual fee, which will be a separate decision, he said.

The proposed "market-affordability gap methodology" will produce a cost per employee for housing that reflects the difference between what the worker can afford and what it actually costs to secure housing in the county.

A comparison prepared by consultants puts the 2012 county impact fee per full-time worker around \$39,000 and indicated the true gap, which could be assessed to development and reasonably defended in court, is about \$277,000.