

Edgewater extends fee breaks in hopes of sparking economy

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The Edgewater City Council, in three separate acts, voted to waive, defer or reduce fees in hopes of promoting economic development.

“Hopefully, this is the last year we do this,” Councilwoman Christine Power said, referring to the economy turning around enough that the city would no longer need such incentives.

The council started by extending for one-year a waiver of annexation fees for all properties coming into the city. Originally, the waiver only applied to non-residential properties, but City Manager Tracey Barlow said the council's action would affect all properties.

The American Legion and Indian River Self Storage are two properties which recently took advantage of the waiver, Barlow said.

“There are others in the pipeline,” he said.

Dropping the fees motivates property owners to move ahead with plans, he said.

The council voted to waive the fees for the annexation of 34.5 acres of land east of Cow Creek Road and north of State Road 442 it approved on first reading.

The council also agreed to extend for a year a policy that allows for the deferral of impact fees for sidewalks, fire and/or emergency medical services, police, and transportation and roads. An impact fee is a charge placed on development that anticipates its effect over time on city services or infrastructure.

The policy permits a business to put off paying impact fees for three years. At the end of that time, they must pay the fees, plus 5 percent interest.

The deferral is an effort to stimulate non-residential growth within the city by allowing businesses time to get established before they are required to come up with the impact fees, Barlow said.

Barlow went on to say the final ordinance approved extended the \$2,000 reduction of impact fees for each full-time equivalent job that is created and maintained for a period of one year.

The extension includes the waiving of all transportation/road impact fees for a structure more than 10,000-square-feet located in an industrially zoned area of the city.

Barlow said Big Planet Pizza on Ridgewood Avenue, U-Store-it self-storage, and Dollar General are three businesses that have taken advantage of the reduction of fees.