



Hall Commission hears call for impact fee moratorium

GAINESVILLE - President of the Hall County Home Builders Association Carl Williams called on county commissioners Thursday to impose a moratorium on impact fees.

Williams said he's seen signs of recovery, but the home builders need all the help they can get when it comes to competing with the high number of foreclosures.

"The moratorium on impact fees would help the home builders compete in today's market where the foreclosures and appraisal values are depreciating home values," Williams said. "We're trying to spur some new construction, give our realtors something to sell, give banks more of an opportunity to lend and home builders something more to build, and keep our local economy alive."

Williams said remodeling is what is driving the home construction industry right now, with very little new home construction in Hall County. Williams predicted that in the next five years when home building hopefully rebounds, the starter home market in the \$120,000 to \$150,000 range would take center stage.

Commissioner Craig Lutz said he wanted the moratorium to start next month and last until December. No commissioners objected but agreed with Chairman Tom Oliver's suggestion to review the effect of the moratorium at the next work session. Lutz also suggested approaching the city of Gainesville about lowering water meter and tap on fees; Commissioner Ashley Bell said he would talk to City Council about that.

THANKS FROM DRUG FREE COALITION

Hall County Commissioners got a big thanks from J.P. Banks, Executive Director for the Drug Free Coalition of Hall County, for imposing stricter rules and tougher penalties for selling alcohol to minors. Banks said while illegal underage alcohol sales continued in the cities, retail sales to minors in the county were sharply reduced.

"It was from Hall County being responsible for nine in 2009 to zero in 2010," Banks said.

According to Banks Hall is one of only four counties in the state to get state grant funding for responsible sales workshops beginning this summer for all retail outlets and restaurants that sell alcohol.

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