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Impact fee rollback shows mixed bag

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Hernando Today

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In November 2009, county commissioners voted unanimously to roll back impact fees for residential and commercial construction to 2001 levels, from \$9,200 to \$4,848. Commissioners hoped the rollback, which would last one year, would prompt new home construction and put contractors and trades people back to work.

But the spurt of activity, at least when commercial and residential activity is combined, has not occurred. From December 2009, when the rollback started, through September 2010, the county recorded 179 residential and commercial permits. That compares to 208 over the same period the year before.

For single-family homes only, the news is better.

The county recorded 134 single-family permits, compared to 105 from the same period the previous year.

Planning staffers will present the findings during Tuesday's county commission meeting.

Commissioners will also decide whether to extend the rollbacks, which end Nov. 30.

Also Tuesday: •It wasn't supposed to be discussed until November, but a last-minute agenda add-on by County Commissioner Rose Rocco will require the board to discuss the controversial interlocal agreement that relegated purchasing authority to the clerk of the circuit court's office.

Rocco has made it no secret that she opposes the agreement and the way Circuit Court Clerk Karen Nicolai offered then rescinded a \$105,000 hiring position for Lisa Hammond to be the clerk's strategic planning director.

Nicolai said she reversed that decision after reviewing the academic background of Hammond and to wait until commissioners decided what to do about purchasing.

Hammond remains a contract employee with the clerk's office and makes \$55 an hour.

•County staff will present a report explaining Amendment 4, which will be on the Nov. 2 ballot.

Planning Director Ron Pianta will include an overview of the proposed amendment along with the potential financial impact to the county's comprehensive plan.

Amendment 4 would allow citizens to approve any proposed changes to a county or city's comprehensive land use plans by voting at special referendum. A comprehensive plan is a blueprint for community growth and sets the foundation for land use in a given area.

The amendment needs at least 60 percent of the total votes for passage.

•Commissioners will further discuss a consultant's management compensation study, which is an extension

of County Administrator David Hamilton's government reorganization plan.

Board members have already approved job descriptions for managers but now must discuss salary parameters.

Human resources Director Cheryl Marsden said recently that Bradenton-based Burriss & Associates arrived at the salary parameters by taking the market average for each job and plugging that into the county's current pay structure.

The county commission meeting is at 9 a.m. Tuesday at the Hernando County Government Center, 20 North Main St. in downtown Brooksville.

For a look at the entire agenda, visit: <http://hernandocountyfl.iqm2.com/citizens/>