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Washinton Twp. eyes change in traffic impact fees

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WAYNESBORO, Pa.

The Washington Township (Pa.) Supervisors are thinking about replacing their traffic impact fees to accommodate a scaled-back plan for a relief route designed north of Waynesboro.

On Wednesday, the supervisors discussed throwing out their current ordinance, using a \$1,000 fee set by Pennsylvania statute, and working with a consultant to establish a replacement fee. They decided to discuss it further at their Monday meeting, which starts at 7 p.m. in the township offices off Welty Road.

Traffic impact fees are assessed on new development in a defined geographic zone to fund development of Washington Township Boulevard. That relief route, last estimated at \$16.7 million, would provide an east-west alternative to Pa. 16. The first section from Pa. 16 in Rouzerville, Pa., to Old Forge Road is open, and a \$3 million bridge was built near Country Club Road.

Now, the supervisors are talking about ending the road at Pa. 316, rather than Pa. 16 west of Waynesboro, to avoid building another, 1,000-foot bridge for \$9 million.

Traffic Planning and Design Inc. said it could do the studies for a new impact fee ordinance reflecting the shortened road for \$35,000, most of which is reimbursable with the fees themselves, Township Manager Mike Christopher said.

Realtor Timothy Light, who is working with land owner Anthony Bittner to develop his property, said Bittner would fund the rest of the study if one commercial lot on his land was developed.

“We want to be part of the solution,” Light said.

Bittner’s property is adjacent to the traffic light near Applebee’s in the boulevard.

Currently, each “traffic unit” created by development generates \$2,714 for the township. Developers say the fees often start at \$100,000 for commercial projects.

Supervisors Chairman Stephen Kulla questioned spending \$35,000 upfront for the new study.

“What about the other 98 percent of people who are (not developers and) are paying taxes and paying the \$35,000? ... How can I justify spending \$35,000 ... when the maintenance people are saying they’re putting Scotch tape on their trucks?” Kulla asked.

“We need traffic relief. Obviously we need to get traffic off Route 16. ... Future generations are going to appreciate this was done,” said Paul Gunder, a Realtor/develop who serves on an impact fee committee.

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