

Suspension of impact fee program to continue in Londonderry

The town's attorney said the audit should be completed by the end of next month.

By APRIL GUILMET

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LONDONDERRY - The town will suspend its impact fee collection program for at least another month, as auditors work to complete a final report analyzing two decades of fee collections, town officials said this week.

During Monday night's Town Council meeting, councilors discussed the matter in detail with town attorney Michael Ramsdell.

Ramsdell advised the town to hold off on collecting its impact fees - including fees for the Londonderry's schools, library, recreation programs, and fire and police departments - for a little while longer.

Earlier this month, a public hearing on school impact fees scheduled during a Planning Board meeting was postponed until further notice.

This week, Ramsdell said the company hired to complete the fee audit, Melanson Heath and Company, was making significant progress.

"It's my understanding that the actual audit will be completed by the end of April, though a written report should be done by the end of this month," Ramsdell told town councilors.

In mid-April, town officials will be required to attend a court hearing.

The probe of Londonderry's impact fee process began in January after a Rockingham County Superior Court judge ordered an audit.

About nine months ago, interim Town Manager Bill Hart revealed that the town could owe up to \$1.3 million in combined impact fees to developers and property owners due to improper collection practices.

"I think it will be prudent at this time to suspend the program until it's time for us to answer to the court," Ramsdell said. "And that's what will happen once we know what the (auditors') findings have been."

The council vote unanimously to suspend the fee collection program until further notice.

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