



Zephyrhills Delays Road Impact Fee Increase

By JASON GEARY, The Tampa Tribune

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ZEPHYRHILLS - The city council agreed Monday to postpone increasing transportation impact fees so developers can provide more input.

An ordinance was set for final approval. However, after developers complained about the rate changes, the city scheduled a workshop before Monday's council meeting.

Kevin Ryman of Ryman Construction said people might think developers and builders are getting rich, but the current economy is tough.

"We are struggling just like everyone else," he said.

Some developers argued the city's proposed rates are similar to the rates charged by Pasco County. They said they wanted to better understand the need for the increase and offer ideas on what it should be.

Transportation impact fees help the city improve roads and infrastructure affected by a new housing development, restaurants or businesses. The city hasn't increased its fees since 2003.

Under the proposed rates, the fee to build a single-family house of less than 1,500 square feet would be \$4,684, up from \$1,588.

City Manager Steve Spina said raising the transportation impact fees would help the city pay for improvements to county roads. If those improvements aren't made, then potential development might not be able to go forward, he said.

However, Spina said he and the city's staff are willing to work with developers and builders to see whether there is a way to make an increase less painful.

"We don't want to put you out of business," Spina said.

The council scheduled another workshop at 4:30 p.m. March 24 to talk about the impact fees.

In other matters, the city will not buy the downtown Wachovia bank building for a library. A feasibility study concluded the cost of renovating the building would be unreasonable.

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