



Council approves school impact fee increase at lower level

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The Sumner School District will soon start getting more money in impact fees from builders in Bonney Lake, but not quite as much as the city originally proposed.

The city council Tuesday night passed an ordinance raising the city's school impact fees from about \$1,200 to \$3,005 per single family home.

The increase brings Bonney Lake's fees to the same level as Sumner and Pierce County.

The increase was requested by the school district after they noticed an accounting error caused the city to pass a school impact fee that was half of what it was the year before and not nearly as much as the district needed.

The district requested the city raise the fees to \$3,005, an amount set by the County Council. But during discussion, the deputy mayor and mayor noticed the district's needs were approximately \$4,400 per new home and suggested raising Bonney Lake's impact fee to that level.

But in discussion before the vote, Shawn Hoey, government affairs associate for the Master Builders Association of Pierce County, asked the council to reconsider the higher amount to meet the district's request and to eliminate "confusion" among differing costs at different jurisdictions.

District officials also told the council the \$3,005 amount would be enough.

In the end, the council followed the recommendation, electing to raise the school impact fees to \$3,005.

Councilman Donn Lewis said he felt \$4,400 was too high at a time when the council was trying to spur building by finding ways to lower impact fees and system development charges.

"This is not the time to go with \$4,400," he said.

"I think that this fee is what the school district has recommended, what they've asked us to do and is consistent with the rest of the county," Councilwoman Katrina Minton-Davis said.

The measure passed 5-0. Council members Randy McKibbin and Mark Hamilton were absent, as was Mayor Neil Johnson (though the mayor does not vote), prompting Councilman Jim Rackley to suggest tabling the ordinance so everyone could discuss it, but the motion was not seconded.

Rackley said he supported the lower amount but thought the discussion should include everyone.

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