

County impact fee study on hold

By MARGA LINCOLN - IR Staff Writer - 06/19/07

TOWNSEND — The Broadwater County Commission on Monday postponed deciding whether to proceed with an impact fee study until emergency response agencies in the county meet Thursday to discuss it.

Broadwater County Planner Shawn Higley of WWC Engineering discussed with the commissioners an e-mail from contractor TischlerBise outlining a possible one-day impact fee workshop for the county.

The workshop would cover basic impact fee requirements and responsibilities; population and land-use forecasts; and capital facility funding.

Consultants would also discuss the feasibility of pursuing impact fees for sheriff's department and fire protection services and transportation facilities.

The firm would meet with elected officials as part of the workshop. And officials can add other categories to the impact fee study, such as schools.

The proposed workshop will cost \$5,500.

Bids submitted for completing the actual impact fee study ranged from \$45,000 to \$127,000.

Commission Chair Jim Hohn said the emergency service agencies need to have some level of buy-in and participation on the study.

"If they don't participate and (help) pay for it, we can't afford to do it. Yet we can't afford not to," Hohn said.

In other planning matters, the commission gave preliminary plat approval for North Canton Major Subdivision.

The 132-lot subdivision northeast of Townsend and adjacent to city limits was approved, subject to meeting 19 conditions recommended by the county planner.

The developers, William and Mary Duede, agreed to install a pedestrian-bike path along the southern border of the development.

They will also install a three-way stop with crosswalk at the intersection of Harrison Avenue and Fourth Street to facilitate children crossing the street from the development.

The approach to the stop will include transverse rumble strips to slow traffic.

The developers are also responsible for upgrading Canton Lane to meet county road requirements for a minor collector.

At full build-out, the development is expected to generate approximately 1,203 vehicle trips per day.

In other matters, the commission gave preliminary plat approval for Longhorn Crossing Major Subdivision, approximately six miles northwest of Townsend off Antelope Road.

A major issue for the 13-lot subdivision during its earlier public hearing was a drainage area in the middle of the lots.

The developer, Jack Jepson of Tigard, Ore., has had the lots reconfigured to address this problem.

However, at Monday's meeting, questions were raised about the septic tank mixing zone from some of the lots crossing into neighboring property.

This is a zone of influence that can result in nitrate accumulations in the groundwater, Higley said following the meeting.

Although the county's subdivision regulations forbid mixing zones crossing into neighboring property, state regulations do not, said Higley.

He advised that the county commission couldn't have more stringent requirements than state law unless it held a public hearing.

Melissa Tuemmler, who represented the developer, said the engineering firm would attempt to move drainfields as far from the property line as possible.

The preliminary plat approval was subject to 16 conditions, including that the water supply and sewage treatment must meet Department of Environmental Quality approval.

Both subdivisions would be subject to impact fees if they are in place prior to lot sales.