

## City Notes — Fuzzy math brings second look at impact fees

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The city will revisit an impact fee proposal that would have cost builders thousands more dollars to construct new homes and businesses within city limits.

Mayor Jeff Holtzinger said a "math error" was partly to blame for the prices that stunned many developers.

Builders have always paid city impact fees to cover the costs of extending and hooking up water lines and sewer service.

Holtzinger on Friday said city staff were still crunching numbers, but in the end the fees would be less than originally been proposed.

He said he did not know how much the proposed fees would be decreased.

Aldermen had considered a plan that could have more than doubled what builders pay now.

A builder pays a little less than \$10,000 in water and sewer impact fees for one house. The board's proposal would raise that to more than \$18,000.

Fees would have also increased for new commercial and industrial development. Commercial developers pay fees based on the number of plumbing fixtures installed, including sinks, toilets and drains.

Commercial development water impact fees would have increased from \$483 to \$825 per fixture unit. Sewer impact fees would have increased from \$495 to \$997 per fixture unit.

The fees were adjusted in response to rising construction costs.

Holtzinger still wants to see builders pay a fee that will fully cover water and sewer costs for new development -- not one that leaves city residents picking up the tab.

"I'm going to try to be aggressive with it, but I want to be fair," he said.

The Board of Aldermen will discuss and likely vote on the new fee structure during their regular meeting starting at 7 p.m. Thursday at City Hall, 101 N. Court Street.

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## City has its day in court

The city's attempt to seize a 150-acre property through eminent domain could be dismissed by a circuit court judge Wednesday morning.

Frederick's planning commission had already approved a 158 town house development on the Hargett Farm property on Butterfly Lane.

Mayor Holtzinger wanted to turn the land into a park with a police substation or a public works facility.

The city offered \$14.19 million for the land in May 2007 -- an amount the developer, Hargett Farm Development, declined to accept, according to court documents.

The developer argues Frederick's seizure should be stopped because the city had not decided what to do with the portion of the land not used for a park and city officials failed to comply with prerequisites before filing their condemnation.

## Budget process begins soon

Soon ... as in March. But the city has already released its schedule of budget meetings in March, April and May.

The mayor and board can expect to spend a little more time together when the fiscal 2009 budget is unveiled on March 12.

Visit the city's website, [www.cityoffrederick.com](http://www.cityoffrederick.com), to see how you can get your own copy of the mayor's proposed budget or call 301-600-1380.

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