

Impact fee moratorium in trouble? – Polk Commission Watch - The Lakeland Ledger - Lakeland, FL - Archive

Until last week, it looked as though the County Commission's approval of an impact fee moratorium was a sure thing .

Now it's unclear.

On Friday, Commissioner Randy Wilkinson said he was having second thoughts about the moratorium.

Commissioner Jean Reed has already said she is opposed to the idea.

Commissioners Sam Johnson and Ed Smith are firmly in favor of the moratorium.

If Wilkinson sides with Reed, that would make Chairman Bob English the swing vote.

English told me today he's still struggling with the issue and hasn't made up his mind.

In the past, English has been at best lukewarm about the idea and its prospects for helping to solve any of the local economy's problems. He speaks with some authority on the impact fee issue since he's the only one on the commission who's actually had to write a check for impact fees. He said he thinks it's a one-time business expense that's really no big deal.

That's interesting because the main argument proponents of the moratorium make is that the impact fee is a barrier to opening a new business, provided opening that business requires a new building. The other interesting part of the argument is that it's coming primarily from the residential, not the commercial, development community, namely the Polk County Builders Association.

It should be a lively debate.