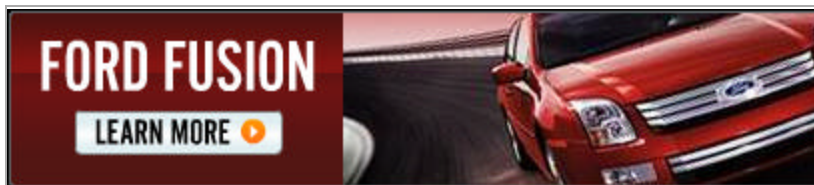


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Developments will pay new fees in Destin

Fraser Sherman/Florida Freedom Newspapers
Thursday January 24th, 2008

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Imposing increased fees on new Destin development is preferable to building roads and sidewalks with bond money, City Councilor Jim Bagby says.

If the city doesn't impose fees that cover the impact of new condos and homes on Destin's roads, parks and libraries, Bagby said, it will incur more bond debt, which it can't afford to do. Bagby said while he's opposed to taxes, he's more opposed to debt.

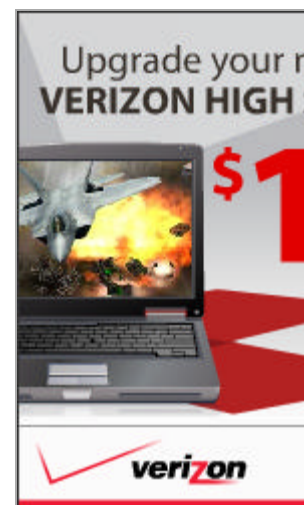
Last year, a consultant said Destin would have to multiply its fees by 10 to cover the cost of providing services and infrastructure as Destin grows.


Rather than add costs in a soft real-estate market, the council told staff to draft an ordinance doubling the fees, then doubling them again in a year.

At the previous meeting, the council told staff the second increase was too much and staff should drop that too. At Monday's council meeting, Bagby said that wasn't enough.

"You're going to have one or two beautiful developments with crummy infrastructure," Bagby said. "I'll vote for this because it's as good as we're going to get."

Business and development groups have criticized the fees, but Bagby said real-estate professionals have said the fees might help the soft real-estate market



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because existing housing stocks aren't subject to the fees.

The council voted 5-1 for the transportation impact fee, with Larry Williges voting no and Dewey Destin absent. Williges said he objected that some categories of development have substantially lower fees.

Williges made the same objection on the police impact fee ordinance, which passed 5-1. The parks and library fees passed unanimously.

The ordinances will come back for a second reading at a subsequent meeting.

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Comments:

Now run that by me again... By: 02Worth - 08:59:29 am on January 24, 2008.
Destin pols are getting just a little worried about their jobs, so they're offering a little sugar with the arsenic that they're feeding the public?

tax golf courses By: almf - 09:18:50 am on January 24, 2008.
they should tax golf. its a major player in destin and sandestin and it takes to much space

1978-2008....same talk..same problems By: U.S. Citizen - 10:34:48 am on January 24, 2008.
The first time I saw the beautiful (and then, almost pristine) beaches of the Emerald

Coast...was 1978 and the specter of unrestricted growth with a lagging municipal infrastructure in Destin was the hot topic... Thirty years later, it's the monster it was envisioned to be...and the municipal government hasn't planned, legislated, budgeted, and implemented programs for problems it knew 30 years ago would exist if they didn't act. Even 10 years ago, since the developed footprint has more than doubled in the past decade, they could have gotten ahead of it... now? Realistically I don't think Destin can fix it's own problem without county and state help - at all our expense. Why? Because they apparently can't get concern for developers out of the way of concern for the public good. Just my opinion...but one that has 30 years of witnessing unrestricted development; and, impotent municipal and fiscal management history as it's basis.

how? By: ginlee - 12:01:33 pm on January 24, 2008.

why was this approved if it didn't even meet the parking required aprking space requirements?

Money Talks By: Kathleen - 12:47:19 pm on January 24, 2008.

The developers are allowed to overbuild in Florida because the developers have the money and persistence to force their way in. This is why we need the Hometown Democracy amendment that allows the community to vote on what we want in our neighborhoods! Time is almost up for getting signatures to get the Hometown Democracy amendment on the ballot.

www.floridahometowndemocracy.com

It's all about the Benjamins By: cab - 03:49:26 pm on January 24, 2008.

If they pay more fees it means more money for the politicians to spend. This means the politicians have even more incentive to allow more and more development.

The fees paid never cover the cost of the additional infrastructure needed to support the project, but that never seems to stop the politicians and developers from overbuilding.

All the politicians see is the added money they get to spend so they approve anything that comes their way. The bigger the project, the more they get to spend, so the less they resist it.

Lost In the '50s.... By: Bill Drake - 06:49:55 pm on January 24, 2008.

My first visit to the Emerald Coast was 55+ years ago and traffic didn't exist. You could drive U.S. 98 and see the Gulf. There were ample motels, restaurants, and service stations to accommodate the visitors. I certainly don't advocate regression to a 1950's configuration of Okaloosa and Walton counties. However, it would have been nice if industry had capped growth and left a little of nature alive!

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