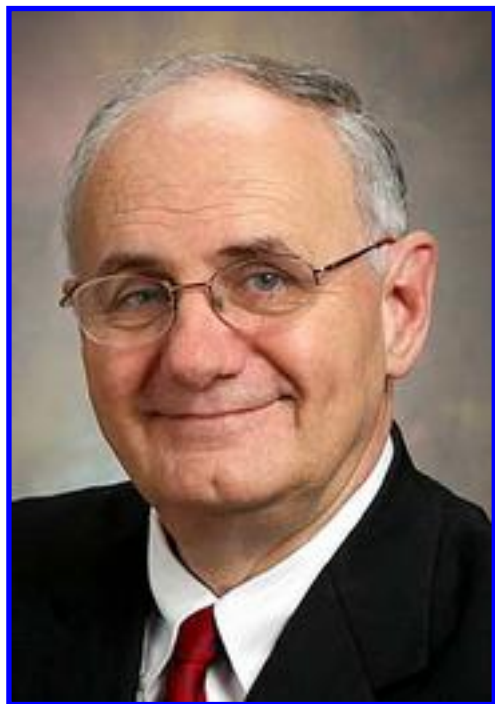


Dorchester Council backs impact fees bill

District 2 board voted unanimously for approval

By Dave Munday
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ST. GEORGE — Dorchester County Council and the District 2 School Board have backed state Sen. Mike Rose's effort to let the district charge impact fees to help pay for new schools.



Mike Rose

County residents have been urging a change in state law to allow impact fees for schools for years. Rose's bill made it through the Senate because it would apply only to District 2, which includes the growing Summerville area.

Council passed a resolution Monday endorsing Senate Bill 235 after debating whether it

should be changed to help its chances in the House.

Councilman Larry Hargett said Rep. Annette Young, R-Summerville, told him the bill likely would die in the House Education Committee unless it's changed to specify that council should make the final decision on how much an impact fee should be.

Council voted 4-2 to endorse the bill as written. Hargett and Councilman Bill Hearn voted against the resolution. Councilman Chris Murphy abstained, saying there are too many unanswered questions about what the bill means.

The school board voted unanimously Monday night to pass a resolution in support of Rose's bill. The board last week had endorsed the concept of the impact fees.

In other County Council business Monday, council denied a request from Treasurer Mary Pearson and Auditor Brenda Nix to make up for a salary cut from the state. The county pays most of their salaries, but the state also was paying them about \$5,400 a year until recent budget cuts. Council voted 5-2 to deny the request, with Murphy and Hearn voting the other way.

Council also kept a controversial ordinance to ban leaf burning in residential neighborhoods around Summerville in committee for more study.

The ordinance would apply only to neighborhoods with at least three houses per acre, which includes more than 20,000 households around Summerville. It was prompted by complaints about residents smoking out their neighbors.

But the proposal also generated a lot of complaints from the other side. Some said hauling their leaves to the county's convenience sites would be a major inconvenience. The county does not pick up trash or leaves.

Council also got legal advice in a closed-door meeting but took no action on a proposal to revoke a \$5,000 raise for council members. The raises — from \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year — are included in the budget that council approved in June.

Several councilmen had second thoughts after the economy took a nosedive this fall. Murphy, Hargett, Hearn and Richard Rosebrock said they would decline the raise. Murphy is trying to get council to revoke the raises.

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