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Dover officials add impact fees for public safety and recreation

DOVER — New developments will now have an additional requirement that city officials hope will mitigate an increasing pressure on city services.

The Planning Board quickly approved a set of new impact fees Tuesday that will allow the city to assess thousands of dollars more in impact fees from new developments, expanding on the current collection of fees for schools and including fees for recreation and public safety.

Tuesday's decision was the first time the city made changes to the fee schedule since the city began assessing school impact fees in 2003.

The fees must be used for capital projects, such as building or renovating schools, and cannot be used to pay for staffing costs or general maintenance.

Recreation impact fees also cannot be used for "public open space."

The board unanimously approved the impact fee changes, following a presentation last month by Bruce Mayberry, the Maine-based planning consultant hired by the city, who presented two different options for each of the three categories of impact fees.

The board ultimately chose a public safety impact fee that includes considerations for capital equipment, such as fire trucks, rather than just building costs for the Police and Fire departments.

Planning Director Chris Parker recommended the decision and said the fee schedule more accurately reflects the actual capital costs of running the department.

Under that model, residential developments will be charged impact fees based on the type of development, ranging from \$767 for a manufactured home to \$836 for a two- to three-family home. A single-family detached home would be charged \$806 for the public safety impact fee.

Commercial developments would also be charged under the public safety impact fee based on square footage, ranging from 13 cents per square foot for an industrial/transportation/warehouse/communications building to 74 cents per square foot for a retail/restaurant/night club building.

The public safety impact fee is the only fee that will be assessed on commercial developments.

The board also concurred with Parker and the Planning Department on their recommendation to adopt a

recreation impact fee based on the "investment method," which would be based on the city's Capital Improvements Program that cites major capital projects planned for the city's recreational facilities in the upcoming years.

Recreation impact fees will range from \$870 for multifamily structures, which are classified as having four or more units, to \$1,184 for single-family detached homes.

The board also decided to choose the "state building cost" model to continue assessing school impact fees. The state building cost fee schedule is based on the state Department of Education guideline for the square-foot cost of buildings.

Parker called the state building cost schedule "more conservative and easier to update" than the other proposed model, which was developed by Mayberry based on enrollment statistics and the school district's future capital plans.

The updated school impact fees range from \$1,054 for a multifamily structure to \$3,654 for a single-family detached home.

The fees have increased from the previous range of \$845 for a multifamily structure to \$3,226 for a duplex or triplex unit. A single-family detached home was previously charged \$3,195.

The school impact fee increases reflect an inflationary increase of about 3 percent per year since they were first enacted five years ago.

Because the City Council voted in 2002 to allow the Planning Board to assess impact fees, the changes do not need to go to the council to be approved.
