



Impact fees increasing more than previously expected

By JENNA BUZZACCO

Wednesday, February 6, 2008

Impact fees are going up.

That may not come as a surprise to city residents until they learn that the fees are increasing more than Naples officials initially projected.

Naples City Council on Wednesday amended a law that would increase the city's impact fees to include the Gordon River Greenway, the Broad Avenue South Park and Naples Fire Station 3. Those additions are expected to increase the fees by \$457, bringing the total for a single-family home to \$1,826, compared to the \$1,369 first projected.

The changes mean the fee structure will have to go before City Council later this month for second, and final, approval.

Impact fees apply to new construction or when an existing building is remodeled to increase its footprint. The one-time payments are needed to accommodate growth.

According to a December report about impact fees, the city expects to generate more than \$1 million in impact fees over five years, or about \$202,000 a year.

During a January meeting, council members asked Naples Finance Director Ann Marie Ricardi if they would be able to include the Greenway project and linear parks. Council also asked if the fees could apply to the expansion of Fire Station 3 at the Naples Municipal Airport.

Adding the Greenway project and linear parks to the parks and recreation fee means that residents will pay about \$1,166 for parks and recreation, compared to the \$777 per single family home the city first projected.

The fire station expansion bumps the fire impact fee up to \$337 per single family home, compared to the \$269 first projected.

"These are both tremendous assets to our community," said Councilman Bill Willkomm. "I don't feel that the dollar amount is outrageous or out of line."

While council members opted to add the Greenway, linear parks and Fire Station 3 improvements, they did not authorize Ricardi to conduct a separate impact fee study to see whether they could pay for the city's parking garage with the fees.

Council had asked Ricardi to review whether it would be feasible to pay for parking garages with impact fees, and Wednesday she told council that she would advise against it.

"Impact fees for a parking garage is not the best way to capture new growth," Ricardi said. "The best way to fund a parking garage is through a special assessment."

Ricardi said it would be hard to convince residents outside of the community redevelopment district, where the garage will be built, to pay for the garage. Instead, Ricardi said she would suggest a special assessment that

would effect where the garage was being built.

The changes need to go before council for a second, and final, reading on Feb. 20. If council approves the changes during that meeting, the fees will take effect May 29.

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