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### Impact fee idea scrapped

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Hernando Today

County Commissioner James Adkins said he is dropping plans to pursue a short-term moratorium on impact fees because he found no support from his board members.

Adkins' plan called for eliminating the fee for six months to a year. He said six other counties in Florida have already enacted moratoriums, including Putnam, Brevard, Wakulla, Bradford, Desoto and Nassau counties.

He still believes his plan would have jumpstarted the local economy by encouraging potential homebuyers to enter the market. That in turn would have put local builders and contractors back to work, he said.

Adkins' said the high unemployment rate in Hernando County, now at 12.9 percent, prompted him to propose the moratorium. But the idea didn't resonate with his colleagues when he broached it during last month's board meeting.

Is he disappointed?

"I don't get disappointed," Adkins said. "I'm trying to help people."

Just this week, the business and economic development committee recommended scrapping Adkins' Comprehensive Plan for Recovery (CPR), a housing stimulus plan he helped create with local homebuilder Blaise Ingoglia.

That plan would have necessitated taking \$2.5 million from the general fund to help finance economic stimulus grant money to potential homeowners who could buy up foreclosed homes.

Adkins said he will continue to introduce ideas he thinks will better the county.

The county's leadership team, comprised of several department heads and County Administrator David Hamilton, is poised to discuss a possible revision of the impact fee ordinance at a future meeting.

Last year, county commissioners considered but rejected a state plan that would have set aside \$20 million in non-recurring funds for a 12-month period and provide down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers.

To qualify, Hernando County would have had to reduce impact fees by at least 25 percent for at least 18

months.