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Impact fee's buying power on the line

Contributed by [Tom Palmer](#) - Posted: June 3, 2008 9:56:35 AM

There has been some low-key lobbying of the County Commission here in Polk County on the decision Wednesday whether to go ahead with a proposal to index impact fees. Indexing means increasing the fees slightly to keep up with the cost of building roads and other infrastructure.

In the past the county impact fees were not reviewed regularly and the county ended up getting behind because the fees didn't come close to covering the costs they were supposed to cover. Also, when the fees had to be increased, the increase was substantial, which produced some real sticker shock that could have been avoided by better planning.

The builders are arguing in e-mails to commissioners that the figures don't justify indexing this year. (Of course, they argue impact fees shouldn't exist at all, so you have to consider the source). Commissioners are asking county staffers to present figures on Wednesday to help them to decide.

Last year commissioners voted to approve a 3.3 percent increase. This year's proposal is for a 2.66 percent increase. The indexing provision was contained in the last impact fee ordinance. The idea is to run governments like businesses in the sense that you charge what you need to charge to provide services. It should be an interesting discussion.

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