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Know the positions on library impact fee

Published Thu, Oct 30, 2008 12:00 AM

The Gazette editorial ("Everyone must help keep libraries sound," Oct. 16) was eloquently on target. Other letters and articles have testified to the importance and indispensable services of our libraries. In our efforts to support the library, we have sought the positions of the town of Port Royal and city of Beaufort elected leadership and candidates for council and mayor on library impact fees.

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These are the only two municipalities in the county that do not collect library impact fees, and they also do not contribute money for library operations. Voters should know the position of their elected officials or those running for office on enacting library impact fees. Letters of explanation with supporting documentation were mailed to all officials and candidates with response forms, and stamped/addressed return envelopes. Thereafter, personal contact was done as needed.

Three Beaufort candidates returned written responses giving positive support of library impact fees: Donnie Beer, Gary Fordham and Harley Laing. In follow-up contacts by phone, in person or at candidate forums, Mike Sutton, Billy Keyserling and Mike Brant were ambiguous and equivocating in their responses. No responses were received from George O'Kelley, Carl Harper, John Gentry and Mike McFee.

Port Royal Mayor Samuel Murray is supportive. Mary Beth Gray-Heyward, Henry Robinson and Vernon Deloach were unresponsive. Joe Lee was noncommittal.

We encourage residents to contact their officials requesting that they enact library impact fees. A reasonable future proposal, should the municipalities not act on contributing to the libraries, would be user fees.

Paula Loftis
President
Beaufort County Friends
of the Library board
Beaufort

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