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Lee commissioners delay decision to roll back or waive building impact fees

By CHARLIE WHITEHEAD (Contact)

4:46 p.m., Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Lee County commissioners decided Tuesday to wait two weeks before deciding whether to roll back or waive building impact fees.

That, builders said, means a de facto building moratorium.

"What the county commission has done today is a de facto moratorium," said Richard Durling, past president of the Lee Building Industry Association and the Florida Home Builders Association and president of Marvin Development. "Exactly opposite of what they were talking about doing."

"They're afraid to lower it," said current Lee BIA president Bob Knight, vice president of Paul Homes. "They're scared to death."

Commissioners discussed lowering at least the \$9,000 road impact fee, but waited to hear a projection from Community Development Director Mary Gibbs on what the new lower amount should be. With no meeting scheduled for two weeks that means a two-week wait.

"There are three things in this county," Knight said. "There's ag, tourism and construction. Ag is dead. Tourism is sluggish based on the national economy. This does nothing to stimulate the local economy. They didn't focus on it. They just blew it right off."

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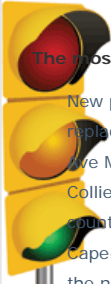
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