

Letter: Impact fees necessary to make growth pay for itself

By TCPalm Staff

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Martin County is at a crossroads. We must do better than these last years of pro-growth, boom debt.

The News article, "Impact fees fall far short of need" (April 14) by Hillary Copsey addresses a major issue.

The Martin County Commission majority has put the community in harm's way, in deep debt. We're facing cuts in library hours, closed parks, police budget cuts, fewer county staff to implement our comprehensive plan protections.

Commissioners Doug Smith, Lee Weberman and Michael DiTerlizzi repeatedly favor developers and special interests. Example: Despite service cuts, these three recently supported developers' whining claims about "too high" development review fees.

When staff explained the fees were set — by commissioners — last October based on the cost to the county, the three boys said they still want to see about lowering developers' costs. That would mean increasing your cost if you are a local taxpayer.

It's a great deal for developers. For a \$500 campaign contribution to pro-growth commissioners, they can get thousands of dollars of their impact fee costs transferred to you.

During boom times, the commission majority should have been fiscally sound, and properly made growth pay for itself. The investigative report instead shows:

- Indian River County's infrastructure budget is 47 percent from impact fees.
- But Martin County's deficit budget is only 9 percent from impact fees; the pro-growthers set impact fees at half that suggested by their own impact-fee experts.

Who wants pro-growth commissioners who put us far into debt?

It's time for a change. We can't afford more pro-growth, big spenders handing out pro-growth favors right through these final months before election.

Martin County is at a crossroads. Supporting Henry Copeland against Smith (Aug. 26 primary), Martha Bennett against Weberman (Nov. 4 general election), and Ian Pollack against DiTerlizzi's heir-apparent, Ed Ciampi (Aug. 26 primary) is critical.

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Palm City



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