



School Consultant Recommends Impact Fee Hike

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BROOKSVILLE - A school board consultant is recommending the school impact fee per single-family home be raised from \$4,266 to \$10,000 to cover new school construction - an increase of about 134 percent.

School board officials will discuss the recommendation at a Jan. 15 workshop.

The consultant, Washington-based Henderson Young & Co., cites a substantial enrollment growth for county schools - a trend that should continue.

The data shows the increase in enrollment during the next five years and the need for new school buildings, the consultant's report said.

The firm also recommends increases to new multi-family and mobile homes.

Currently, impact fees per single-family home in Hernando County total \$9,027. That includes all seven impact fees. Should this consultant's recommendation be approved, the total would be \$14,761. That's not including any of the other proposed six impact fees Hernando County is expected to hike.

New homebuyers in Hernando County currently pay seven impact fees, which are imposed on developers and builders to fund capital improvements in the community.

The county is also reviewing its impact fee rates and is scheduled to make its recommendations after the first of the year, according to Planning Director Ron Pianta.

The county is required by county ordinance to review the fees every two years. County commissioners ultimately approve impact fee rates.

Hernando Builders Association President Hampton said this month that it is vital the county not raise impact fees during this period of market uncertainty. It could further push Hernando County out of the housing market, he said.

"If we raise impact fees next year, then (Building Director) Grant Tolbert can shut his doors because he will not have any business," said Hampton, who is also president of BJH Construction Inc. in Ridge Manor.

In November, Hernando County recorded only 29 single-family home permits, almost setting a new record. The last time permits were that low for a single month was 12 years ago, in October 1995.

Hernando County has 10 elementary schools, four middle schools, four high schools and one combination school that houses elementary and middle school grades kindergarten through eighth grade.

There is also one alternative program school for grades 4-12 students-at-risk, along with other support facilities for the school district.

Local homebuilder Blaise Ingoglia announced the news at a meeting Thursday sponsored by the Hernando County Taxpayers Alliance, of which Ingoglia is a member.

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