

Planning Commission

September 21, 2020

The Planning Commission met on Monday, September 21, 2020 at the Law Enforcement Center. The following members were present: Chairman Don Hamilton; Lowell Seal; Mario DiPietro; Latresa Gilstrap; Tommy Holcombe, Building Official; Stephen Steese, City Administrator. Absent: Bob Fedder.

The following items were presented to the Board for discussion:

Impact Fees

Chairman Don Hamilton opened the meeting by welcoming all to the Planning Commission meeting. He then called on the City Administrator, Stephen Steese, to give information. Mr. Steese presented 9 slides and explained that an Impact Fee analysis was completed by a Third-Party Company and the requirements for charging an Impact Fee. Mr. Steese stated that the maximum fee allowed would be around \$3,300 for single-family and around \$2,200 for multi-family buildings. Mr. Steese then explained where the money received from the potential addition of impact fees would be distributed within the City should it pass Council vote. Mr. Steese showed comparisons to other municipalities within the state to emphasize that the fees are like others.

Don Hamilton then opened the meeting to the public for discussion.

Danny Youngblood, Developer and City of Easley resident. Mr. Youngblood asked for clarification one of the slides and then stated that he feels impact fees are not fair to low income or first-time buyers. It's a set fee that would be a sizeable amount to buyers on a strict buying budget. Income has been good for the City and developers will look elsewhere before looking to build in Easley. Also, he feels that 2020 is not the year to do this. He recommends that the Commission takes all of this into account and vote against the fees.

Ben Mosely, President-Elect of the Homeowner's Association of Greenville, representing for 600 businesses and professional in the building industry. Mr. Mosely said an email had been sent out to the Planning Commission and encouraged the email be read and considered. Mr. Mosely said his father was a Builder in California in the 1980s and his business did not survive the Impact Fees that were added, and he moved his family cross country to South Carolina to be able to provide for his family. Mr. Mosely feels that it is a slippery slope and should be voted down.

Dan Bracken, Real Estate Company Owner, lives in Powdersville. Mr. Bracken said that building in Easley is good right now. He said that homeowners will not be able to buy a home with these fees. He doesn't feel that this is the time to add fees when the housing market is so low on inventory.

Reba Thompson, Glen Laurel subdivision, lifetime Easley resident. Owns a vacant lot in her neighborhood that she would one day like to build on. Stated that right now is not feasible because material fees are so high, but that when the time comes the added impact fees could make it too high to develop. She said she's been paying taxes on it as a vacant lot and feels that there are other options to make up revenue for City needs. Questioned if money can't come from other areas where taxes are already paid by the citizens.

Dustin Kennedy, Owner of Impact Realty Group, East Main Street. Mr. Kennedy said appraisers aren't appraising the homes at the correct amount and they won't take the impact fees into consideration when setting the appraised amount. He said commercially it won't make sense for builder/tenant to have to add impact fees to the already expensive costs.

The meeting was then opened to the Planning Commission for discussion.

Mario DiPietro said that the City of Easley is behind the times. He feels that taxes are low. Mr. DiPietro says that we need assistance on how to handle the infrastructure of the growth. Whether it be adding fees or some other avenue, a decision needs to be made.

Don Hamilton, Chairman, explained that the Planning Commission is an advisory board and that the request will go to the City Council for the next two readings for approval. He also explained the process for the request to be approved; that it must be approved at two Council Meetings. If denied at the first Council Meeting, then it is no longer an agenda item.

Daniel Youngblood, Jr. of Wellington Dr, asked to speak. He asked for clarification on the process once it goes to Council and then recommended that the City look at other options to save money.

Dan Bracken also agreed that another study for other options would be advisable.

A motion was made to deny the impact fees by Mario DiPietro, seconded by Lowell Seal. All board members present voted against the impact fees.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Tommy Holcombe
Easley Building Official