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City sticks with existing impact fees; *Little revenue from impact fees collected in 11 years for Chiefland*



Chiefland City Commissioner Tim West (on the left in the bottom right of photo) is seen walking to roughly measure the distance between two points as developer Hal Lyons watches. Neither man broke their stride, even at lunchtime Tuesday (Sept. 25) as the result of an unannounced visit by a roving reporter. This development located on the east side of U.S. Highway 129 north of the Ace Hardware in Chiefland is one of two RV sites being built now within the city limits. Commissioner West is among the individuals vested in bringing this particular development to fruition. He and other developers recently let the city know they oppose adding more impact fees or using a per-lot basis for imposing them on new RV parks being built in this city. In his recently-elected position as a city leader, West will recuse himself and abstain from votes if there is a potential for him to see personal gain from such a vote. In Florida, elected officials must vote on all motions unless they have a vested interest in the matter being voted upon.

Story and Photos

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 27, 2018 at 11:08 a.m.

CHIEFLAND – Two separate developers who are currently constructing sites for recreation vehicles, as well as building the structures to serve those future visitors to Chiefland saw no change in impact fees on Monday night (Sept. 24) during the regular meeting of the Chiefland City Commission.

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This photo taken from a video shows the Save-A-Lot shopping center (corner of U.S. Highway 19 and U.S. Highway 129) in the upper left corner. The RV owned by developer Hal Lyons is in the middle more or less.



Here is another view of the Strawberry Fields For RV'ers RV Park development as it was seen Tuesday afternoon (Sept. 25). Putting pipes and wires into the ground as well as brining the ground to a certain elevation is part of the first construction in a development like this. The two largest objects seen in the distance sticking up on the horizon are two of the City of Chiefland's elevated water storage tanks.

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A worker stands in a deep trench created for developing part of the infrastructure of the RV park. The trench was created by a backhoe, however workers with shovels are needed for some of the finer points of construction on the bottom of the trench. when laying pipe for water and sewer service, one of the many rules of physics that must be applied by builders is that water does not flow uphill -- unless there is pump involved.

There had been a tiny bit of saber-rattling at a previous City Commission meeting in regard to reviewing the existing impact fees and potentially creating a new method to measure the impact from new RV parks or RV resorts in Chiefland.

Alan Wallace, a principal in the development of Southern Leisure RV Resort -- and Hal Lyons and Tim West, two men leading the development of Strawberry Fields 4 RVer's RV Park -- all previously have expressed their concern about a potential change to the existing impact fee ordinance of the city.

The developers adamantly opposed the idea of a per-lot fee, which does not exist in current law for the city.

On Monday (Sept. 24), the Chiefland City Commission followed the recommendation of City Manager Mary Ellzey to take no action in regard to changing anything about existing impact fees. Funds to update the Chiefland impact fee study are not included in the 2018-2019 fiscal year budget (Oct. 1, 2018-Sept. 30, 2019), Ellzey noted.

The previous discussion by the City Commission led to the city manager checking with the company named Government Services Group Inc. to determine a cost for updating the old impact fee study.

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The estimated cost was between \$15,000 and \$20,000 to update the city's impact fees, Ellzey noted for the City Commission. In the past 11 years, impact fees have not generated a significant amount of revenue for Chiefland, because construction of new structures has been relatively small.

In regard to revenue raised for the 11-year period from 2007 through 2018 as of Sept. 24, the city manager noted there were 14 new single-family homes built, and 10 new commercial business structures built, which all paid a combined total of the following for impact fees during those 11 years: Fire Impact Fee - \$19,269.14; Law Enforcement Impact Fee - \$23,939.67; Recreation Impact Fee - \$794.03; Transportation Impact Fee - \$23,023.62.

All other building inspection fees, water and sewer connection fees and other expenses for development, as well as these impact fee rates have been and are available to any developer who sees Chiefland as a market for their services.

Both new RV developments remain under construction in Chiefland as of Sept. 27. Southern Leisure RV Resort's Phase One already has rented lots in advance of its completion. Southern Leisure RV Resort is the larger development planned.