

## Letters to the **EDITOR**

### Do we really need impact fees?

Recently, a lot of talk has been going around about impact fees. Seems that most people do not have the right understanding of the fee. I was in on the start of getting this fee into a law. I am not proud of this fact, but I also did not have the true facts about it.

I was part of an organization called "The Concerned Citizens of Citrus County." This group was started over the County Commission approval of a very controversial subdivision called "Pepins Mooring" along Gobbler Drive in Floral City. We hired a lawyer and fought against it and won the battle to get the project stopped.

Hank and Miriam Cohen were the leaders of our organization, and we were very active in many projects to help make a better Citrus County. We had seminars on many subjects like garbage disposal, recycling, septic tanks, P.U.D., along with impact fees. We always tried to get the speakers with the most knowledge of the subject. Much very good information was discussed on each subject, and we usually had a good-size, interested audience. But (not) even with invitations could we get many commissioners to come to these very information-filled seminars.

As the subject of impact fees came around, the Cohens were in the process of trying to get it into a law, and they told our group, at a seminar we held on impact fees, that it was a fee to be put on new people moving to Citrus County and building a home. It was to offset the added cost of schools, roads, police, etc. I, along with the rest of our members, thought it was going to be a good thing as it was explained.

What a surprise I got as I learned later that the law was made with different wording, as it was taken to Tallahassee. I told the Cohens, this was not the way it was first explained to our group. Now it was a fee to be not put on only new movers to the county, but on all new construction, residential, commercial or whatever. This law would affect everyone living in the county either recently or all their life. Definitely not the way it was meant to be.

Developers always made the same pitch to get their plans approved, by stating that all the new tax money from developments would benefit the county greatly. So if new buildings bring in so much new tax income, why do we have to have impact fees, which affect everyone. We got along without them before, so why do we need them now?

### Eliminate impact fee, other taxes

Once again the Chronicle is trying to push their liberal impact fee on to people and businesses that want to build in Citrus County.

Why should we want to discourage new building in Citrus County? The *Chronicle* keeps bringing up what other counties do or did regarding the impact fee.

Frankly, I for one, don't give a damn what other counties are doing regarding this issue.

Do you realize that along with the impact fee there is the water meter recovery fee of \$2,700 that must also be paid when building a new house, not to mention the building permit fee. You are looking at \$10,000 in taxes just to start building.

What are you thinking man? If you were so concerned about squeezing more taxes from people, do it equally. What is your liberal-minded reasoning, when someone wants to build a house it will impact the county in such a way that person deserves to pay your impact taxes, meter recovery taxes, building permit taxes, etc?

To be fair, every time a house, new or old, is bought, there should be an impact tax.

Everyone has an impact not just the person that built the house. But then, that's why we have property taxes. Forget the impact tax. It isn't fair. The meter recovery fee is another unjust tax that needs to be eliminated.

We are taxed enough already. I'm happy we have some conservative-minded people on our BOCC.

**Bill Watkins**  
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