

SPECIAL SESSION:

State of West Virginia, County of Jefferson, to-wit:

At a Special Session of the County Commission of said County and State continued and held at County Commission meeting room in the Old Charles Town Library located at 200 E. Washington Street, Charles Town, WV 25414 on March, 16 2015 at 7:00 pm (An audio file of the March 16, 2015 meeting is available through the Jefferson County Commission Office.)

PRESENT:       Jane Tabb, President  
                  Patsy Noland, Vice President  
                  Eric Bell, Commissioner  
                  Dale Manuel, Commissioner  
                  Walt Pellish, Commissioner  
                  Stephanie Grove, County Administrator  
                  Jessica Carroll, Administrative Assistant

**RE: Public Hearing – Impact Fees**

Commissioner Tabb called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and Commissioner Bell led the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Tabb explained the public comment process to the audience, stating that all speakers would have three minutes to give their comments. Ms. Tabb also explained that the Commissioners were not permitted to answer questions or respond to the public during the hearing. Comments were received by the following:

Ellen May, resident – spoke in favor of retaining impact fees at the level stated in the latest TischlerBise report, stating that impact fees are critical to maintaining public services.

Randy Hilton, resident – spoke in support of the impact fees, stating that if impact fees were to be reduced or eliminated, local schools would become overcrowded and the quality of education would decline.

Scott Sudduth, resident and President of the Jefferson County Board of Education– stated that a decision to reduce or eliminate impact fees would have a lasting negative impact on the County, specifically the school age children of the community. Mr. Sudduth also listed the ways in which the impact fees have benefited the local schools over the past ten years.

Laurie Ogden, resident and Jefferson County Board of Education member – spoke in favor of impact fees, stating local schools will become more crowded and dangerous without the benefit of impact fees. Ms. Ogden also urged the opposing sides to work together to reach a workable solution for all parties.

Casey North, resident – spoke in favor of the reduction of impact fees, stating he had to withdraw funds from his 401k in order to pay the current cost of the county impact fee for a single family home.

Mark Osbourne, resident and Jefferson County Board of Education member – spoke in support of the impact fees at the level suggested in the TischlerBise recalculation report in order for schools and services to stay in harmony with the potential growth of the community.

Kathy Skinner, resident and Jefferson County Board of Education member – spoke in favor of the impact

fees at the level suggested in the TishlerBise recalculation report, as the impact fee is beneficial to local schools, parks and other essential services and allows for a higher quality of life in Jefferson County.

Leslie Mezeska, resident – spoke in favor of the impact fees suggested in the TischlerBise recalculation Report, stating she does not want her children to be taught in portable classrooms due to overcrowding as they pose safety and weather concerns.

Joe Spurgas, resident and retired principal – stated the continuation of impact fees at the level recommended in the TischlerBise impact fee recalculation study is essential to the function of local schools and allows administrators and educators to focus on instruction and achievement instead of technological, safety, and weather related concerns caused by overcrowding.

Paul Marshall, resident and President of the Jefferson County Parks and Recreation Commission – stated impact fees are a fair and rational way to support growth in the County and listed the ways in which impact fee monies have benefited the Parks and Recreation Commission and the community as a whole.

Frank Kubic, resident – stated he believes impact fees are a “dishonest tax” and should not be imposed upon people who wish to live in Jefferson County.

Paul Rosa, resident - spoke in support of the impact fees as recommended in the TischlerBise recalculation report and stated the commercial impact fee should be restored.

Eleanor Finn, resident and member of the League of Women Voters – spoke in support of the impact fees at the level recommended in the TischlerBise recalculation report.

Tim Cowan, Division President for Dan Ryan Builders – stated that Jefferson County has only seen approximately a 2% rate of growth and believes that a reduction of impact fees would draw more residents and a larger tax base for the County.

Dr. Lori Stilley, resident and former board member of the Jefferson County Board of Education – stated a reduction or elimination of impact fees would cause a huge burden on the local school system and all children will suffer as a result. She also urged the Commission to work with the School Board to reach an agreeable solution.

Susan Offut, resident and Principal of Shepherdstown Elementary – stated schools are the County’s greatest resource and need to be treated as an investment. Ms. Offut also stated Shepherdstown Elementary was in dire need of repair or replacement, as it is now outdated and overcrowded.

Ken Lowe, resident – stated he believed the impact fee issue would resolve itself and expressed his concerns regarding the legislature raiding purse funds for live thoroughbred racing.

Vicki Eckert, resident and volunteer with Jefferson County Youth Soccer League – expressed her concerns over the limited facilities available for sports activities and the effect a reduction or elimination of impact fees would have on the progress at Hite Road Park.

Alyssa Meeks, resident – stated it is illegal to collect impact fees in an area with a low growth rate and also advised the audience to research the ways in which impact fee monies can be used, as the impact fee cannot be used for building repairs or classroom materials.

Will Garrett, resident and State Trooper – stated his dream was to build his own home on the property he purchased in Jefferson County; however, the impact fee is extremely cost prohibitive and unfair to current residents.

Denny Barron, resident and Treasurer of the Shepherdstown Volunteer Fire Department – stated Shepherdstown Elementary was in dire need of replacement and hoped citizens would come together to support impact fees and local schools.

David Hartley, Eastern Panhandle Homebuilder’s Association – stated that impact fees have been a good resource for Jefferson County; however, impact fees need to be reexamined because they impede economic development and do not allow for workforce housing.

Mike Wiley, resident and member of the Citizens for Economic Preservation – spoke in support of the reduction of impact fees.

Ramona Weslyn, resident – spoke in favor of the reduction of impact fees and questioned why the volunteer fire departments are excluded from receiving impact fee monies.

Kevin Tester, resident – stated impact fees were never meant to be permanent and spoke in favor of their reduction.

Dan Kovak, resident – stated the impact fees are supposed to be temporary and questioned if the county’s tax dollars are being used properly if the schools and other entities must rely so heavily on impact fees.

David Tabb, resident – thanked all of the citizens for attending the public hearing and urged those who desire to live in Jefferson County to purchase old homes as an investment in the community.

Don Orser, resident – questioned the accuracy of the TischlerBise recalculation study and believes the student enrollment numbers are inflated.

Larry Vogler, resident – spoke in support of the impact fees as recommended in the TischlerBise recalculation study.

Ann Moutz, resident and member of the Jefferson County Parks and Recreation Commission – spoke in support of the impact fees as recommended in the TischlerBise recalculation report, stating people will not want to reside or start businesses in Jefferson County if there are poor schools and parks and limited amenities for children.

John Reisenweber, resident and Director of the Jefferson County Economic Development Authority – stated he believes impact fees are a barrier to economic growth and favors the reduction of residential impact fees.

John Smith, resident and business owner – stated he had some confusion over the ways in which the impact fee can be used, and claimed he had to move his contracting business from Jefferson to Berkeley county because so few people can afford to build in Jefferson County due to the cost of the residential impact fee.

Jacqueline Milliron, resident – stated she was disappointed the Commission would consider the reduction of impact fees. Ms. Milliron also urged the Commission to explore ways in which the impact fee can be used for infrastructure.

Peter Fricke, resident and current member of the Jefferson County Planning Commission – stated the Envision Jefferson 2035 Steering Committee proposed a 2-tier impact fee that would be higher within the County and lower within the cities, municipalities, and urban growth areas to control sprawl; however, this suggestion was eliminated from the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Fricke stated the impact fees need to be restructured in a way that makes starter homes more accessible to the residents of Jefferson County.

David Harty, resident – requested the Commission consider reducing the residential impact fees in the same manner as the commercial impact fees and stated that the entities reliant on impact fees should research new means of generating monies.

Mark Dyck, resident and Impact Fee Subcommittee member – stated he was “less than impressed” with the TischlerBise impact fee recalculation report and questioned the validity of their system.

Andrew McMillan, resident – spoke regarding his concerns over the condition of Shepherdstown Elementary School, and urged the community to work together to find a resolution to the impasse between the School Board and the Commission.

Brett Stone, resident – stated he was happy to see so many involved in the impact fee discussion, but believes tax money and revenue from the casino are being mismanaged by the Board of Education if the schools must rely so heavily on the collection of impact fees.

Ralph Dinges, resident and Assistant Superintendent of Jefferson County Schools – urged all attendees to please keep the children in mind when considering the reduction or elimination of impact fees.

Chris Hill, resident – stated he believes the impact fee is unfair because it’s only collected from new homebuilders when current residents also contribute to an increase in services through having additional children.

There being no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 9:37 pm.

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JANE M. TABB, PRESIDENT

Respectfully submitted  
Jessica D. Carroll  
Executive Administrative Assistant