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Developer requesting 50-year impact fee deferral

By Mike Wright

A Melbourne developer returns today to the Citrus County Commission in hopes of getting a 50-year impact fee deferment to build an affordable housing apartment complex in Beverly Hills.

Commissioners turned down Diamond Housing Developers on the same request in June. Commissioners said they were vague on Diamond's plans and that the project didn't have approval among Beverly Hills community groups.

Assistant County Attorney Peter Aare also said an ordinance requires that all impact fees be paid before the county issues a certificate of occupancy. His opinion has not changed, according to county records.

The board meets at 1 p.m. in the courthouse in downtown Inverness.

County Administrator Brad Thorpe said he placed the Diamond matter on the agenda at the developer's request. He said he is making no recommendations whether the board should support it or not.

Diamond is asking for a 50-year deferment on \$80,000 in transportation impact fees for an 80-unit apartment or townhouse complex on Roosevelt Boulevard near the Central Ridge Library.

The project is called Rolling Oaks, though it apparently has no connection to Rolling Oaks Utilities, the provider of water and sewer in Beverly Hills that is Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Diamond said that it is seeking conventional financing through the Florida Housing Financing Corp., or FHFC. Competition for the financing is strong and the FHFC requests local government contributions.

Diamond initially requested the county waive impact fees, and then amended it to a 50-year deferment. Company representatives also told commissioners the deferment is for \$80,000, while Diamond still intends to pay the remaining impact fee — about \$431,000 — at the normal time of construction.

Thorpe said the project still does not have community support in Beverly Hills.

Mike Colbert, chairman of the Beverly Hills Community Council, told commissioners in an e-mail that opposition to the project remains.

He wrote: "We've heard several different versions of what they wish to do but nothing to change the existing circumstances and situation that being: apartments of any design at this time, in that location, are not needed nor wanted and the vast majority of the voting residents here urge that you turn a deaf ear to this group's pleas regardless of what they are for."

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