

Fire districts and concurrency

February 6, 2023

11:04 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, County Manager Erik Martin, Barbara Russell, Lee Napier, Eric Eisenberg, Becky Butler, Nic Scott, Karen Witherspoon, Mindy Brooks, Kate Chatterton, Commissioner Swope

Guest(s): Unidentified guest

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Public comment: None.

Eric Eisenberg discussed “concurrency,” which is a principle under the Growth Management Act (GMA) that establishes requirements regarding services that must exist concurrently with development. He said the county’s current process asks districts – such as fire districts – to confirm that they are able to serve the additional need when new developments are built.

Eric said some districts, especially fire districts, do not have the resources to cover additional growth. He said the county’s practice has been that the development is denied if the districts do not sign off on the concurrency paperwork. However, he noted, the GMA does not specifically say that the development must be denied due to the lack of concurrency.

Eric said developers could be asked to mitigate their own needs, rather than address the systematic issues created by earlier development. He suggested creating an application packet that would address the new impacts. He also suggested development fees that would go to the districts that otherwise would be unable to serve the new development.

Lee Napier said developments are being held up because the districts cannot sign off on new projects because the fire districts do not have the ability to serve the additional growth. Karen Witherspoon indicated four projects currently are being held up due to concurrency issues: Two long-plats (a 36-lot and a 10-lot projects) and two short plats with four lots apiece.

The group discussed concerns with charging developer fees. Eric said his suggestion is to hire a consultant to develop a formula that would address the impacts the new developments would have. He estimated the consultant cost at \$10,000 to \$20,000.

Barbara Russell noted that the GMA requires the county to determine whether adequate services are available.

The commissioners said they’d like Eric to continue working to develop a process moving forward, concentrating on fairness of application.

Meeting ended at 12:07 p.m.