

321 Committee recommends residential impact fees

BY CANESHA GORDON
THE NEWS EXAMINER

PORTLAND - The Portland Board of Mayor and Aldermen finance committee decided Monday night to recommend to the city council that Portland charge an impact fee on all new residential property to pay for parks and public safety.

An impact fee is a fee charged on new construction to pay for infrastructure upgrades made necessary by the new construction.

The recommended impact fee for a single family home less than 1,500 square feet is \$1,098 for parks and \$391 for public safety. A single family home that is 1,501 square feet to 2,999 will cost \$1,228 in impact fees for the parks system and \$437 for public safety. For a home 3,000 square feet and above, the cost will be \$1,416 for parks and \$522 for public safety. For multi family residential construction, the impact fees will \$907 for parks and \$324 for public safety per dwelling.

recommending that commercial and industrial construction will not have to pay an impact fee.

"I think the impact fee is very important, we have got to have some kind of fee," said Mayor Ken Wilber, who is not a member of the finance committee.

"I would like to not see an impact fee on commercial and industrial," he said.

Wilbur fears that an impact fee on commercial property might deter companies from building in Portland.

Portland resident and business owner, Wayne Bandy supports an impact fee for residential construction.

"Majority of folks who would be against it, who aren't here again like this rather than a property tax," said Bandy.

The committee voted unanimously to send the recommendation on to the full board for a vote.

The next board meeting will be held at 7 p.m. March 6 at

FARM CREDIT SERVICES

Commissioners discuss Shaw Ferry, open burning

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By MARY OPENSHAW
Staff writer

Tennessee Department of Transportation's (TDOT's) agreement to pay 80 percent of the cost for improvements at Shaw Ferry Road and Highway 11 seems to have hit a snag: the department now says it doesn't have the money. Loudon County Mayor George

Miller told county commissioners at their Monday workshop that after he contacted TDOT to ask about the project's status, he was told it had been assigned a project number, but there was no money for it.

Last year, TDOT said it would budget approximately \$740,000 to fix the Shaw Ferry/Highway 11 intersection, if the county will put up 20 percent of the

funds, or roughly \$150,000. Now, Miller said TDOT advised him to take the project to MTPO (Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization), which he did. MTPO reportedly told Miller it would try to get it into their budget. Miller said he will contact state legislators about the matter "to try to bring this back on track."

TDOT's change of direction surprised

commissioners. "We all thought this was a done deal," noted Commissioner Harold Duff.

The commission also discussed placing some kind of ban on open burning to clear large tracts of land. Mike Crosby, vice-chairman of the county's Air Quality Task Force, presented to commissioners the information he gave the

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task force last week about the amount of pollution generated by clearing land by burning. One of the most notable facts he mentioned was that the partic-

ulates created by burning 100 acres of land are nearly equal to the amount of particulates created by all cars and trucks in Loudon County in one year.

He added, however, that the county could design an open burning ban that would protect the rights of private individuals while doing away with large-scale burning.

"I know there's concern, because [Loudon County] is a rural community, about individual farmers with brush piles to burn," Crosby said. "I believe an ordinance could be crafted to allow that type of thing ... it's the quantity that we're talking about."

Knox County's open burning ordinance makes provisions for private individuals with brush to clear, Crosby added. Ron Moore, a member of the Breathe Clean Air Action Team, pointed out that out of 3,000 counties in the U.S., only 220 have been placed in non-attainment by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Loudon County is one of them, for ozone and fine particulates (PM2.5).

"It's not like there are a whole lot of people doing this," Moore said. "[There are] less than one in 10."

Moore said even though there are more pollution controls in place now than there were in the days when people used wood and coal for their heating needs, pollution has grown worse because industry

and power plants now use more wood and coal. Coal is burnt to operate both heating and cooling systems and to create electricity.

County resident Pat Hunter asked how the cities' ordinances would affect or be affected by any ordinance the county passed. She said there have been times in her neighborhood when smoke from open burning was so dense "they sent out a policeman because they thought someone's house was on fire."

"If much of the county is in the [cities'] growth plan, how will this ordinance affect what's happening now or in the future?" she asked. She mentioned Trigen, an industry in Loudon that burns wood sludge. "If county commission is going to address particulates, it needs to address industrial processes that lead to particulates," Hunter said. "They are a problem when they are so close to residential neighborhoods."

Commissioner Don Miller said the county can't tell Trigen to stop putting out particulates, but the City of Loudon can. He added commission had recommended the City of Loudon "pursue regulating or fining" to

get the industry to comply with emissions regulations. The city is reportedly following up with Metropolitan Technical Advisory Service to find out what kind of ordinance they need to pass, but have gotten no answer yet.

Commissioner Chuck Jenkins asked whether the county could regulate open burning through its planning and zoning office. County Attorney Harvey Sproul said he would check into it and see if that would be possible.

Crosby talked about grinding brush rather than burning it, which would be more environmentally friendly, but costs roughly double what burning costs: an estimated \$5,000 per acre versus \$2,500 per acre.

Commissioner Van Shaver said he'd seen "air curtain burns" to clear brush in other areas. He noted such burns don't produce smoke. According to Air Burners LLC, (www.airburners.com), a company that sells equipment for air curtain

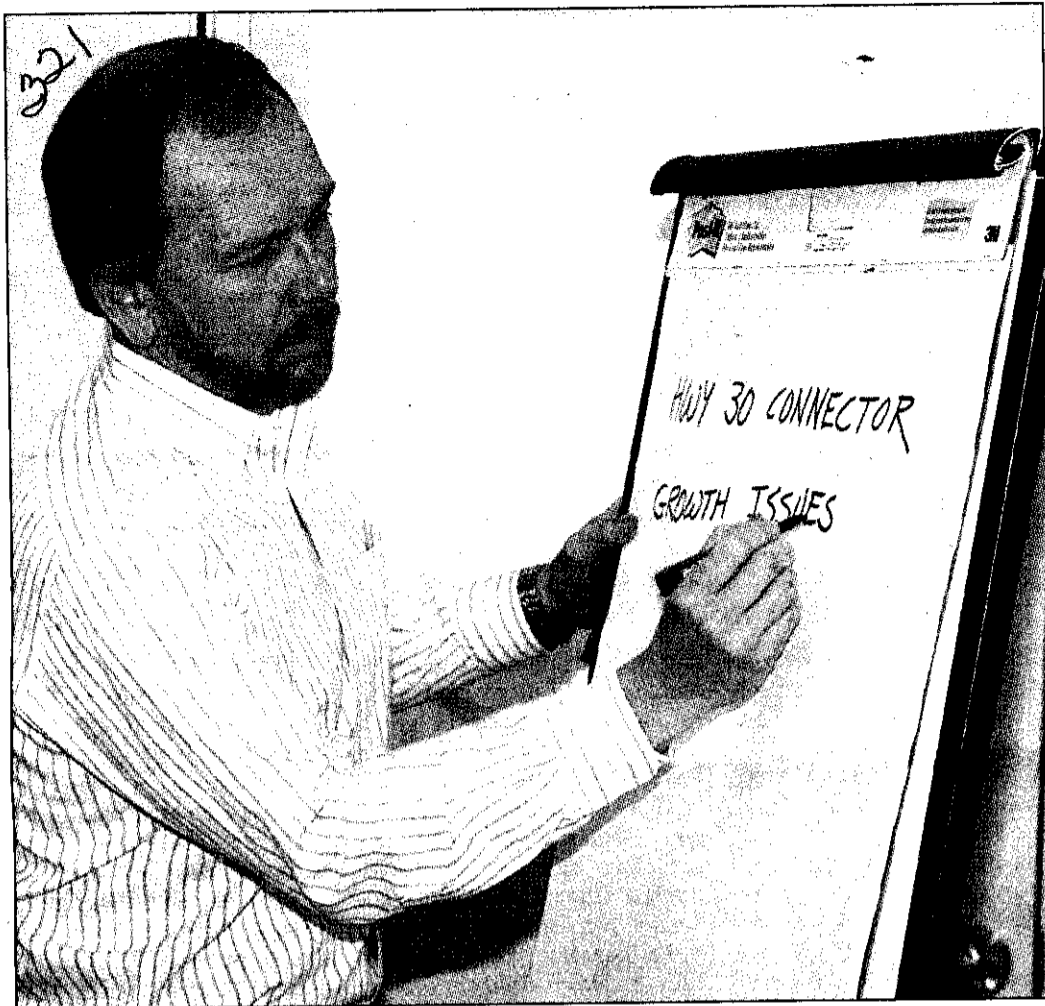
burning, the process involves introducing controlled, fast-moving air across the upper portion of the combustion chamber in which clean wood waste is loaded.

"The powerful curtain of air created in this process traps unburned particles under the curtain in the high temperature zone where temperatures can reach 1,832° F (1,000° C)," the site says. "The increased combustion time and turbulence results in a re-burn and more complete combustion of the loaded waste. The escaping particulates are reduced to near their base elements."

Crosby said Knox County sometimes uses air curtain burning.

Shaver noted grinding wood and brush could require hauling the resulting chips to the landfill, which costs \$35 per ton for waste deposited there. "Any alternative that helps with cost will make it a lot more palatable to the people we hear from," Shaver said.

CHARTING THE GROWTH



Photos by Ryan Harris

Athens Mayor John Proffitt lists the Highway 30 connector, also known as the Athens bypass, and growth issues as priorities during a strategic planning session Wednesday.

Preparing for all eventualities

City Council studies future growth pattern

RYAN HARRIS
Staff Writer

Maximizing the use of existing municipal features while preparing for future growth was the theme of a strategic planning session held Wednesday by the Athens City Council.

"The technology that is going to take place in the next 20 years is going to be a quantum leap for Athens," said Council member Dick Pelley. "We have to be prepared for all eventualities."

That includes planning for growth that doesn't have an adverse effect on schools, transportation and infrastructure, Council members said.

Annexation continued to be discussed by city leaders. Athens has long looked to the Mt. Verd corridor as an area of growth, because of its access to Interstate 75.

Athens City Manager Mitch Moore suggested the Council consider an annexation policy, so the city can be better prepared when the municipal boundaries grow.

"We have to protect our boundaries, almost like a country," Council member Charles Myers said. "We need to make sure things don't grow around us that will be detrimental to our quality of life."

While planning for that growth, Council members discussed ways to preserve the existing features of the city.

Pelley said the city should capitalize on its



Athens Vice Mayor Bo Perkinson, left, and Council member Dick Pelley discuss issues Wednesday.

waterfront property, near Oostanaula Creek. He suggested the city develop a river walk-type attraction, similar to the greenway trails used in other cities. Pelley said that plan could help with aesthetics and flood control.

There has also been talk about a developing a walking trail on the old railroad routes.

Vice Mayor Bo Perkinson said those goals are important to maintain as the city approaches annexation. He said the city can't lose sight and neglect other areas of the city while attempting to expand the municipal boundaries.

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Growth

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"It's good to talk about annexation while taking care of what we have now," Perkinson said.

Other goals listed by the Council included the Highway 30 connector, long known as the Athens bypass. There has been a long debate over whether a northern or southern route should be selected for the road. Both the Athens Council and the McMinn County Commission agreed last year to let state officials

pick a route.

City leaders said more partnerships will be needed in order for the region to flourish. Council members said Athens needs to take charge of a regional cooperation, and get other cities and counties on board.

"Athens could be the center point for this region," Perkinson said.

Mayor John Proffitt said Athens proved its ability to pull surrounding municipali-

ties together during the animal shelter expansion. That project was unanimously approved by every government entity in McMinn County.

The plan allowed for the expansion of the Athens animal shelter to house animals from anywhere in the county.

"If we can take stray dogs from all corners of the county," the mayor said, "we can do anything."

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Music City Star sees summer start

From staff reports

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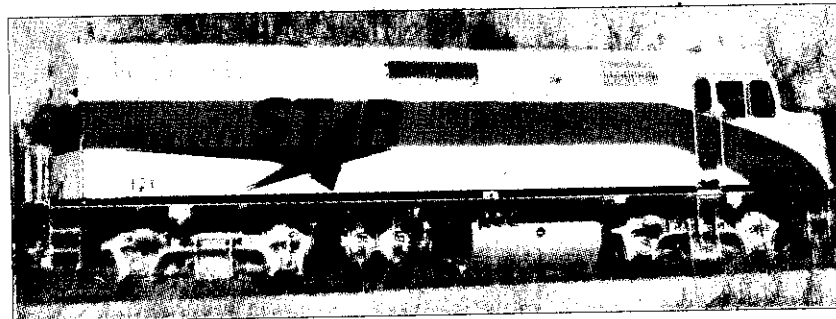
Mid to late summer is the startup period now being told for the 32-mile commuter rail line scheduled to run between Lebanon and Nashville.

Initially, officials associated with the commuter system believed first trains may run as early as October or November 2005 and later changed their estimates to early 2006. Just recently the startup date was moved again to mid to late summer.

Lebanon Mayor Don Fox, a member of the Regional Transportation Authority, the governmental agency that oversees the commuter rail project, said Thursday a start date for operating the train between Lebanon and Nashville had been delayed a couple of times because federal funding for the project, although approved,

had not yet been received.

He said the RTA is confident now that the \$6 million federal appropriation will be secured in time to start trains running this summer.



The Music City Star should be rolling by mid-summer.

According to Fox and other RTA officials, the construction of five stations that will serve the commuter train, the Music City Star, is being

completed on schedule. Stations are currently under construction at sites in Lebanon; at Martha near Highway 109; in Mt. Juliet at Division Street; and in Davidson County at locations

in Hermitage, Donelson and at the commuter rail's final destination at Riverfront Park on First Avenue.

RTA's Allyson Shumate said at the

present the agency is still working with train schedules and other issues that stand to affect passenger travel.

She said the agency plans to survey the public in the near future in an effort to help determine when it may be best to run trains to meet the public's needs. On the Music City Star website a schedule for the commuter rail is posted, but Shumate said that this is only a "proposed" schedule and that it is likely that this schedule will change before the rail operation actually begins.

The East Corridor (Lebanon to Nashville) of a mass transit Middle Tennessee commuter rail system is the first portion scheduled to be launched. Other commuter rail lines are being planned to reach from Nashville to

Maury, Cheatham, Dickson, Rutherford and Robertson counties. The commuter rail between Lebanon and Nashville is to operate on track now used by the Nashville and Eastern Railroad.

Sewer service to hilly area poses challenge

Franklin official wants to cede land to Brentwood

By KEVIN WALTERS
Staff Writer

FRANKLIN — Would the city of Franklin give up land?

If it's the land around the intersection of Wilson Pike and McEwen Drive, Ward 2 Alderman Dana McLendon believes the city should cede that property to Brentwood.

That's his solution to alleviating what city leaders say is a long-standing concern about providing sewer service to that hilly area. And it's part of ongoing efforts to offer sewer service in a rapidly developing county without incurring the cost of building more pump stations.

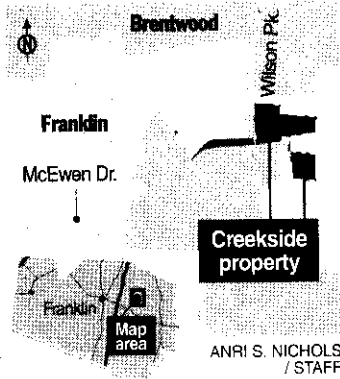
While the issue centers primarily on land and sewage, larger questions involve cost, the city's responsibility and politics — none of which appear to be easily solved.

"We risk losing all the progress that we have made around the city in reducing the number of pump stations," McLendon said about building a pump station to serve this area. "It's a bad idea."

At their February meeting, aldermen voted down a plan of services for the Creekside development/Traditions property east of Wilson Pike. By doing so, the board shot down the potential annexation of nearly 40 acres of land for that development.



MCLENDON



ANRI S. NICHOLS
/ STAFF

Tennessee law mandates that a service plan must be in place before annexation can occur. Instead, McLendon says the city should give up the land, which is in the city's urban growth boundary.

The land apparently drains downhill into the Mayes Creek drainage basin, which is closer to Brentwood and thus would not require building a new pump station in order to push the wastewater needed, officials said.

"Brentwood has sewer pipes in the ground nearby downhill," McLendon said. "There is a significant portion of the property that cannot be served by Franklin by pump stations that could be served by Brentwood without pump stations."

Cost vs. responsibility

Adding more pump stations means incurring greater costs for their construction and upkeep.

McLendon estimated a modest pump station costs the city thousands of dollars annually. That's not counting its construction costs.

"It's like buying batteries for your kids' Christmas presents," McLendon said. "It never ends."

That the land is in the city's urban growth boundary (UGB) means the city has some responsibility to the future development of that land, Ward 4 Alderman Dan Klatt said.

And Klatt sees the issue as being one that the city must address eventually.

"As long as it's in the UGB then eventually the city of Franklin, if not soon, some board on down the road will have to tackle the responsibility for it," Klatt said.

Discussion about this issue is nothing new. It came before the board years ago, City Administrator Jay Johnson said. But he also points out that deannexation is "very rare."

Johnson told aldermen that the matter would eventually have to be addressed whether it's now or in 20 years.

Yet McLendon is undeterred. He believes that deannexation of that land is "as realistic as we make it."

"I'm not talking about putting a man on Mars," he said.

Political resolution

But would the city of Brentwood

be willing to listen to the city of Franklin?

McLendon called Brentwood officials accepting this land "the best-case scenario."

While stressing that he could not make any commitments, Brentwood City Manager Mike Walker left the door open to discussions with Franklin leaders about the matter.

"I think we'd all be willing to sit down and talk about some of these tracts that are particularly oriented to Brentwood," Walker said.

Alderman at Large Dennis Phillips called the idea of Brentwood taking the land "pie in the sky."

"I'm not sure I can see that much cooperation taking place," Phillips said.

Both Klatt and McLendon said that politics may play a role in how this matter is resolved.

And that will take time and cooperation.

"Politics are a question at this point," Klatt said. "If we take it out of our UGB responsibility, I would hope that Brentwood would eventually put it in their UGB for eventual development and annexation at their standards."

McLendon doubts that any discussion about potential changes regarding the urban growth boundary would occur until after the county elections later this year.

Said McLendon, "It would be unlikely that all the powers that would need to acquiesce would coalesce around that in the height of an election season." ■



KLATT