

County may raise proffers

Board to consider hike "to the low \$20,000 range"

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

The Chesterfield County government is recommending that its board increase the maximum proffer "to the low \$20,000 range," according to Chairman Dickie King. Late last week, the Bermuda supervisor said he had not yet been briefed by County Administrator Lane Ramsey about the exact amount, but "that's what I have been led to believe."

Asked if the increase was in "the low \$20,000 range," Ramsey said, "I can't confirm or deny the amount. Before we release the amount, I

want to first meet with each board member to explain our calculations and then with the Home Building Association [of Richmond]."

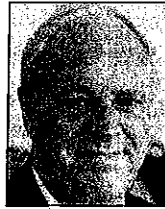
Last October, the board unanimously approved a 35 percent hike of the maximum proffer from \$11,500 to the current \$15,600. A higher proffer of \$20,000 would be a 28 percent increase; \$22,000 would be 41

percent higher.

The board will consider the hike in its afternoon work session on August 23, but the actual vote may come later. Annually, the budget and management office studies the cost of providing services—roads, schools, parks, police and fire and libraries—to county residents and businesses. Requiring developers to pay proffers helps pay for those services.

According to Ramsey, the proffer increase is being driven by three factors: state cuts in road funding,

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Ramsey

road construction inflation of 7.5 percent last year and a higher calculation of students per household. The county has been using a countywide average of .53 students per household, but last year the county government proposed using .63 students per household for new homes only. Ramsey said his staff has confirmed the higher figure as requested by the board in October.

The three factors, added Ramsey, have had a "dramatic impact" on the cost of building roads and providing public education. If the board had accepted the .63 figure last year, it would have increased the maximum school proffer from \$5,348 to \$7,225. The current maximum proffer lists roads at \$8,942, police and fire at \$405, libraries at \$349 and parks at \$604 per household, regardless of whether the home is single-family or an apartment, townhouse or condominium. The board rounded that total amount to \$15,600.

King opposes an increase in proffers. However, he wants the county to eliminate age-restricted and age-targeted housing from the county's proffer calculation for schools. That would increase proffers for housing designated for seniors.

The county planning commission has not yet voted to lift the senior housing designation, but a clear majority wants to do away with it. Chesterfield is concerned that it might have to evict residents from their homes, if they didn't meet the age requirements required by zoning. Planning Director Kirk Turner has also endorsed its elimination.

"We're watching the [proffer] issue closely," said Vernon McClure, vice president of the Home Building Association of Richmond. "The market has moderated so I hope there's no increase in proffers."

"The housing market is leveling off, and now is not the time to increase proffers," agreed Tyler Craddock, director of public and government affairs for the association.

Chesterfield has more than 40,000 lots zoned residential that have not yet been built on. Many of them were zoned more than 15 years ago before the county adopted a proffer system. How many could actually get a building permit is unknown. Some are small lots without water and sewer that may not have enough land for a septic field or land that might not perk.

Security proffer

County planners are already negotiating a

County	Maximum Proffer
Amelia	\$5,970
Charles City	\$0
Chesterfield	\$15,600
Cumberland	\$2,958
Dinwiddie	\$5,629
Goochland	\$15,804
Hanover	\$14,240
Henrico	\$0
James City	\$4,400
Loudoun*	\$46,819-47,846
Louisa	\$0
Powhatan	\$7,236
Prince George	\$12,387
Prince William*	\$37,719
Stafford*	\$38,151
Spotsylvania*	\$35,295

*Northern Virginia
Source: Home Building Association of Richmond

security proffer with developers of multifamily projects. According to Turner, a condition of zoning will be "submitting a security plan for review and approval that is designed to discourage criminal activity."

Chesterfield police would review the amount and types of police calls required for those communities annually.

The planning commission is in agreement but hasn't voted on the security matter. The board of supervisors would have final approval.

"Depending on the number and nature of the police calls, you could be required to provide onsite security personnel," explained Turner. That could mean hiring off-duty police officers to monitor the community during specified days and times. Serious crimes would be weighted more than less serious ones.

Currently, Turner says three apartment complexes exceed the tentative standard. But multifamily communities with zoning already approved would be exempt.

Chesterfield currently has only 19,078 apartments, townhouses and condos, far less than the 42,222 units in Henrico County. But more multifamily homes in Chesterfield are being built.

From 1995-2005, Chesterfield only averaged 635 units per year. But in 2004 another 1,096 were added followed by 1,579 last year. Planners say multifamily requires more fire and police service than single-family neighborhoods.

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