

Young, Shaneka

From: Andrew, Devonia L.
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2008 11:11 AM
To: citycomm
Subject: FW: Fire Fee/Tax

FYI

From: Hawkins, Jr., Thomas
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2008 11:00 AM
To: 'Tony/Rosy Cauterucci'
Cc: Andrew, Devonia L.
Subject: RE: Fire Fee/Tax

Mr. and Ms. Cauterucci,

Thank you for taking the time to share your opinions. I do not take the levy of the proposed fire assessment lightly. The City Commission is also considering substantial budget reductions, including removing positions in the police and fire departments, and may even adopt a millage rate which is higher than our expected rollback rate. I do not take these propositions lightly either. I assure you that each of us will weigh our, and our citizen's, values in making these decisions. I appreciate your input.

Thomas

Thomas Hawkins, Commissioner-At-Large
City of Gainesville, Office of the City Commission
200 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32602-0490
Phone: (352) 334-5015
Fax: (352) 334-2036
commth@cityofgainesville.org

From: Tony/Rosy Cauterucci [mailto:ajcrrc@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 9:36 PM
To: Hawkins, Jr., Thomas
Subject: Fire Fee/Tax

Dear Mr. Hawkins:

We are writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

We have two reasons for making this request. First, religious organizations, no matter what their denominational affiliation, have been the guardians and the transmitters of a basic system of values upon which the cohesiveness of our society depends. Our founders clearly considered this a commission that was worthwhile safeguarding. Consequently, they built into our foundational

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constitutional documents guarantees to keep governments and politicians from impeding or impairing that responsibility. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional right that could forebode future political encroachments that impede the ability of those institutions to function as they should.

Second, a distinguishing characteristic of the organizations mentioned above is economic sharing of their resources and the personal contributions of time and energy of their members for the welfare of the community---normally directly for the welfare of the most needy within our community. However, their economic resources are finite. The payment of the fire tax reduces funds that might normally be used for more altruistic purposes within our county. In effect, by requiring religious organizations to pay the fire tax, the City Commission is forcing them into a zero sum situation that over the long run can have deleterious effects on the persons in our community who are traditionally overlooked and ignored by governmental institutions.

Our founders clearly recognized the dangers to community and society that come when religious organizations are subjected to political and economic pressures. As concerned citizens, we want to urge you once again to reconsider imposing the fire tax on religious organizations.

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Cauterucci

Rosalba C. Cauterucci

Young, Shaneka

From: Andrew, Devonia L.
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2008 11:13 AM
To: citycomm
Subject: FW: Proposed Application of the Special Fire Assessment to Churches and Other Non-Profits

FYI

From: Hawkins, Jr., Thomas
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2008 11:12 AM
To: 'jimgrisham1'
Cc: Andrew, Devonia L.
Subject: RE: Proposed Application of the Special Fire Assessment to Churches and Other Non-Profits

Mr. Grisham,

Thank you for taking the time to share your opinions. I do not take the levy of the proposed fire assessment lightly. The City Commission is also considering substantial budget reductions, including removing positions in the police and fire departments, and may even adopt a millage rate which is higher than our expected rollback rate. I do not take these propositions lightly either. I assure you that each of us will weigh our, and our citizen's, values in making these decisions. I appreciate your input.

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200 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32602-0490
Phone: (352) 334-5015
Fax: (352) 334-2036
commth@cityofgainesville.org

From: jimgrisham1 [mailto:jimgrisham1@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 12:28 AM
To: Hanrahan, Pegeen; Hawkins, Jr., Thomas; Mastrodicasa, Jeanna; Henry, Scherwin L.; Poe, Lauren B.; Donovan, John F. - Commissioner; Lowe, Craig; citymgr
Subject: Proposed Application of the Special Fire Assessment to Churches and Other Non-Profits

Dear Mayor Hanrahan, Commissioners Hawkins, Henry, Mastrodij, Poe, Donovan, Lowe & Manager Blackburn:

I am writing as both a concerned citizen and a Christian who is a member of Trinity United Methodist church.

Dr. Dan Johnson, the senior pastor of Trinity United Methodist church, has written a letter to the Gainesville Sun

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and appeared on WCJB to voice his opposition of the proposed application of the fire assessment to Gainesville churches and other non-profits.

I support Dr. Johnson and other Gainesville pastors fully in their opposition to the application of the proposed special fire assessment to Gainesville's churches and non-profits.

The state of Florida and its subdivisions have a long history of not imposing taxes and fees on churches. This is not the time to break with this tradition.

As Ron Cunningham noted in his Gainesville Sun editorial of May 29 - "Churches and other nonprofits feed the hungry, unite broken families, shelter abused women and children and perform a host of other services that would otherwise have to be financed with public tax dollars . . . Gainesville doesn't have to assess nonprofits - themselves providers of indispensable community services - to keep its fire department adequately funded. I hope that you will amend the proposed fire assessment fee legislation to fully exempt Gainesville's churches and non-profit organizations.

Thank you for reading my comments.

Jim Grisham
4003 NW 60th Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32653

Young, Shaneka

From: Andrew, Devonia L.
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2008 10:49 AM
To: citycomm
Subject: FW: fire fee objection

FYI

From: Hawkins, Jr., Thomas
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2008 10:40 AM
To: 'Randy Scott'
Cc: Andrew, Devonia L.
Subject: RE: fire fee objection

Mr. Scott,

Thank you for taking the time to share your opinions. I do not take the levy of the proposed fire assessment lightly. The City Commission is also considering substantial budget reductions, including removing positions in the police and fire departments, and may even adopt a millage rate which is higher than our expected rollback rate. I do not take these propositions lightly either. I assure you that each of us will weigh our, and our citizen's, values in making these decisions. I appreciate your input.

Thomas

Thomas Hawkins, Commissioner-At-Large
City of Gainesville, Office of the City Commission
200 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32602-0490
Phone: (352) 334-5015
Fax: (352) 334-2036
commth@cityofgainesville.org

From: Randy Scott [mailto:rscott@novamin.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 2:37 PM
To: Hawkins, Jr., Thomas
Subject: fire fee objection

Dear Mr. Hawkins,

I am writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

I have two reasons for making this request. First, it would seem to be a subversion of our long-cherished American tradition of not taxing churches. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional principle.

Second, a distinguishing characteristic of the organizations mentioned above is economic sharing of their resources and the personal contributions of time and energy of their members for the welfare of the community.

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Essentially, our houses of worship are public facilities paid for by private donations. Furthermore, their operating budgets are finite and serve many broader purposes in the community. The fee accomplishes one thing: It will directly reduce the social services provided by the churches.

I know my church feeds hundreds of hungry families every year; houses dozens of homeless families every year; provides facilities for voting, middle school graduations, community recreation leagues; we even provide a driveway for use by the neighboring elementary school – all at no cost to the general tax payer base or City/county budget. In regards to the cost of fire protection – that protection directly benefits our members – almost all of whom pay taxes (or fees) for fire support to the City or County.

My suggestion to our Church council would be to merely assess a small “fire fee pass-along charge” to every voter using the facility on election day; every school parent coming to attend a middle school graduation; every elementary school parent dropping their kid off in the morning; every community member using our ball fields; every homeless family spending the night; every boy/girl/cub scout group meeting in our rooms; every non-profit organization that meets in our facilities.....

If we need additional funds for the fire department, then lets just increase the taxes or cut another expense. It will be more palatable, its constitutional and it ends up with the same result: the people of our community paying for the fire protection we need.

Thanks,
Randy Scott

Randy Scott
NovaMin Technology, Inc.
Phone: 386-418-1551 ext. 125
Fax: 386-418-1465

NovaMin Technology, Inc. is dedicated to innovations that improve oral health care. Visit us at www.novamin.com, www.oravive.com and www.remindoneright.com

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Thank you.

NovaMin Technology, Inc.

Young, Shaneka

From: Andrew, Devonia L.
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2008 12:04 PM
To: 'Pam Rowland'
Cc: Poe, Lauren B.
Subject: RE: fire fee

Good Afternoon Ms. Rowland,

Your e-mail correspondence has been received by Commissioner Poe. Thank you for taking the time to voice your concerns in this matter.

Devonia L. Andrew
Executive Assistant to the Mayor

From: Pam Rowland [mailto:pamelarow@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 3:34 PM
To: Poe, Lauren B.
Subject: fire fee

Dear City Commissioner;

I am writing to urge you to rescind the fire fee on all religious organizations.

Religious institutions should be kept separate from state as the constitution reads. The fire fee/tax is a violation of that constitutional right and will affect the ability of churches to function as they should.

The payment of the fire tax reduces funds that would normally be used to support the needy in this community. In effect, people supporting the churches are being taxed double as well.

So, I urged you once again to reconsider imposing this fire tax on religious organizations.

Sincerely,

Pam Rowland

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Pam Rowland [pamelarow@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 3:34 PM
To: Poe, Lauren B.
Subject: fire fee

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So, I urged you once again to reconsider imposing this fire tax on religious organizations.

Sincerely,

Pam Rowland

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Jan Huffstetler [jhuffstetler@ufl.edu]
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2008 9:30 AM
To: citycomm
Subject: Taxing Churches

Dear Ladies/Sirs:

I totally agree with the following statements. In my opinion, it would be inappropriate to tax churches and/or non-profit organizations.

It occurs to me that this diversion from our 200+ history of not taxing churches and non-profits is a double hit on the churches, for this reason: Who mainly supports the non-profits? The Churches! I understand that the city is experiencing a difficult shortfall, but rather than reverse 200 years of history, why not form a blue ribbon committee to investigate alternative ways of addressing this problem.

Thanks, jan

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This message was generated on the City of Gainesville Website.

User Name: Jan Huffstetler

User IP address: 159.178.72.203

Client software: Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 7.0; Windows NT 5.1; .NET CLR 1.1.4322; .NET CLR 2.0.50727; .NET CLR 3.0.04506.648; .NET CLR 3.5.21022; InfoPath.2)

Young, Shaneka

From: Andrew, Devonian L.
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2008 7:06 AM
To: 'peace3555@yahoo.com'
Cc: citycomm; citymgr
Subject: RE: FIRE FEE

Good Morning Ms. McKeown,

Your e-mail has been received by the Mayor and members of the Commission and it is being shared with the City Manager. Thank you for taking the time to voice your concerns.

Devonian L. Andrew
Executive Assistant to the Mayor

From: Carolyn McKeown [mailto:peace3555@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 5:58 PM
To: Lowe, Craig; Donovan, John F. - Commissioner; Poe, Lauren B.
Cc: Henry, Scherwin L.; Mastrodicasa, Jeanna; Hanrahan, Pegeen
Subject: FIRE FEE

I am writing you concerning the fire fee you are trying to charge churches and other organizations in this city. I want to point out the obvious to you. If you charge this fee it will back fire on you as a city. You WILL be picking up the slack that these churches and organization have been picking up for you for years and you will have a bigger problem than money. You will have a bigger problem, while you are letting things build up because you are not prepared for the issues that have not been taken care of because the churches and organization can not do them any more, the city will go down hill and you will end up paying even more to take care of things. I believe this fire fee is illegal, against the laws of the United States. If I were you I would crush this out of your agenda before the national news gets ahold of it.

I understand the city is having money problems like everyone else in the country. Lets look at a long term solution. My one suggestion would be for the city county and schools to go solar. While you still have maintenance people working for you. Start with one building make it run on solar, then with the saving you can from that building you can pay for more solar and wind energy for other building. It seems to me that a big problem this country is having comes back to oil. The sun and wind are free. Lets make the oil company understand that we can do without them. Be more selfsufficient. If you can get a grant for the initial solar project you are on your way. A fire fee is a tax on any church or organization and is wrong morally also.

I know personally how hard things are out there, I only make \$8.50 an hour and my spouse has been out of work for over a year and a half. And the unemployment has run out. We have not applied for food stamps or any other services from the government, We are trying to be self sufficient. We pay our property with our mortgage payment so we know you get money from all of us property owners. We make ends meet by growing some vegetables for our selves in the back yard, in a 6 foot by 3 foot patch, and we have cut out all things like cable TV etc. I wish I could get solar panels to make my own electric and be more self seficiant. My child does not get to do things that other children get to do some times,

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but he does get to do things with our church and he does get opportunities from the church that he would not get if the church had to pay you. He gets scholarships for mission trips and other learning and worthwhile opportunity's from the Church that I can not afford to give him. Please don not charge this fire fee, it would do nothing but hurt your city.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Young, Shaneka

From: Carolyn McKeown [peace3555@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 5:58 PM
To: Lowe, Craig; Donovan, John F. - Commissioner; Poe, Lauren B.
Cc: Henry, Scherwin L.; Mastrodicasa, Jeanna; Hanrahan, Pegeen
Subject: FIRE FEE

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Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Young, Shaneka

From: Brown, Neomia B.
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 4:01 PM
To: 'Ruth Smith'
Cc: citycomm; citymgr
Subject: RE: Fire Tax on Churches

Good Afternoon Ms. Smith,

Your e-mail correspondence has been received by the Mayor and members of the City Commission. Thank you for voicing your concerns in this matter.

Neomia Brown
Executive Assistant to the City Commission

-----Original Message-----

From: Ruth Smith [mailto:Raks33@cox.net]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 3:49 PM
To: citycomm
Subject: Fire Tax on Churches

Please do not enact the fire tax on churches. The line between church and state is clearly drawn in the constitution, Additionally, imposing a tax on churches for a governmental service would certainly draw a court case. Do you really want to use taxpayer funds for what seems to be illegal?

Do you want to hurt the very institutions which are giving much to our area in the way of services for programs the city is now not funding? Many churches would have a difficult time maintaining their level of giving--basically worth more than what the city would recover by this taxation.

This message was generated on the City of Gainesville Website.
User Name: Ruth Smith
User IP address: 24.250.251.253
Client software: Mozilla/5.0 (Macintosh; U; Intel Mac OS X 10_5_3; en-us)
AppleWebKit/525.18 (KHTML, like Gecko) Version/3.1.1 Safari/525.20

Young, Shaneka

From: Ruth Smith [Raks33@cox.net]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 3:49 PM
To: citycomm
Subject: Fire Tax on Churches

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AppleWebKit/525.18 (KHTML, like Gecko) Version/3.1.1 Safari/525.20

Young, Shaneka

From: Andrew, Devonia L.
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 3:23 PM
To: 'ccapen1'
Cc: citycomm; citymgr
Subject: RE: fire fee on churches

Good Afternoon Ms. Capen,

Your e-mail correspondence has been received by the Mayor and Commissioners Hawkins, Mastrodicasa and Poe. It is also being shared with the other members of the City Commission and the City Manager. Thank you for taking the time to voice your concerns.

Devonia L. Andrew
Executive Assistant to the Mayor

From: ccapen1 [mailto:ccapen1@cox.net]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 3:04 PM
To: Hanrahan, Pegeen; Mastrodicasa, Jeanna; Poe, Lauren B.; Hawkins, Jr., Thomas
Subject: fire fee on churches

Dear City Commission Members,

I am writing to express my lack of support for imposing a fire fee on churches. I know you have heard the historical argument against such a tax and I certainly agree with that argument. I know you have heard the outrage that churches would be taxed in this way while the University is not. I find that outrageous as well. To say that you are barred from taxing the university in this way and then turn around and violate the separation of church and state by taxing churches represents convoluted and unreasonable logic. I think these constitute strong arguments, but they are not, in my mind, the only strong arguments.

I attend Trinity United Methodist Church and am privileged to serve on the missions committee there. Trinity, through donations from its members, supports the structures that you propose to tax for fire services but that is a terribly small part of what Trinity gives to the community. Within those buildings, Trinity serves the community's children, those dealing with addictions, those suffering grief, families who need help getting reestablished, the elderly; it offers a wealth of classes for those who wish to learn about religion and a great deal more. Trinity supports the needy in the community by sharing with Gainesville Community Ministries, St. Francis House, House of Hope, the Helping Hands Clinic, Bread of the Mighty, Prime Time for kids, Acorn Clinic, Salvation Army, Arbor House, Peaceful Paths, Ronald McDonald House, Habitat for Humanity, and Rebuild Gainesville. When the funding for thanksgiving dinners for the hungry was cut, Trinity teamed with the community to see that service done too.

Does it make any sense at all to undermine these services to the community to feed a different one? If you magnify the services provided through this one church by all the churches in Gainesville, can you see what horrible damage would be done to those who are most in need of the help our churches provide? It generates images of snatching food from the mouths of the hungry, because that's exactly what it would do.

It is a tax, it does violate the separation of church and state and it harms those least able to fend for themselves. I hope you will consider another way to solve the problem of funding fire services.

Regards,

Cindy Capen
Gainesville resident, taxpayer and voter

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: ccapen1 [ccapen1@cox.net]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 3:04 PM
To: Hanrahan, Pegeen; Mastrodicasa, Jeanna; Poe, Lauren B.; Hawkins, Jr., Thomas
Subject: fire fee on churches

Dear City Commission Members,

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It is a tax, it does violate the separation of church and state and it harms those least able to fend for themselves. I hope you will consider another way to solve the problem of funding fire services.

Regards,

Cindy Capen
Gainesville resident, taxpayer and voter

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Randy Scott [rscott@novamin.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 2:37 PM
To: Henry, Scherwin L.
Subject: fire fee objection

Dear Mr. Henry,

I am writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

I have two reasons for making this request. First, it would seem to be a subversion of our long-cherished American tradition of not taxing churches. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional principle.

Second, a distinguishing characteristic of the organizations mentioned above is economic sharing of their resources and the personal contributions of time and energy of their members for the welfare of the community. Essentially, our houses of worship are public facilities paid for by private donations. Furthermore, their operating budgets are finite and serve many broader purposes in the community. The fee accomplishes one thing: It will directly reduce the social services provided by the churches.

I know my church feeds hundreds of hungry families every year; houses dozens of homeless families every year; provides facilities for voting, middle school graduations, community recreation leagues; we even provide a driveway for use by the neighboring elementary school – all at no cost to the general tax payer base or City/county budget. In regards to the cost of fire protection – that protection directly benefits our members – almost all of whom pay taxes (or fees) for fire support to the City or County.

My suggestion to our Church council would be to merely assess a small “fire fee pass-along charge” to every voter using the facility on election day; every school parent coming to attend a middle school graduation; every elementary school parent dropping their kid off in the morning; every community member using our ball fields; every homeless family spending the night; every boy/girl/cub scout group meeting in our rooms; every non-profit organization that meets in our facilities.....

If we need additional funds for the fire department, then lets just increase the taxes or cut another expense. It will be more palatable, its constitutional and it ends up with the same result: the people of our community paying for the fire protection we need.

Thanks,
Randy Scott

Randy Scott
NovaMin Technology, Inc.
Phone: 386-418-1551 ext. 125
Fax: 386-418-1465

NovaMin Technology, Inc. is dedicated to innovations that improve oral health care. Visit us at www.novamin.com, www.oravive.com and www.remindoneright.com

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Thank you.

NovaMin Technology, Inc.

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Andrew, Devonia L.
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 2:53 PM
To: 'Randy Scott'
Cc: citycomm; citymgr
Subject: RE: fire fee objection

Good Afternoon Mr. Scott,

Your e-mail correspondence has been received by the Mayor and members of the City Commission and it is being shared with the City Manager. Thank you for taking the time to voice your concerns.

Devonia L. Andrew
 Executive Assistant to the Mayor

From: Randy Scott [mailto:rscott@novamin.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 2:42 PM
To: citycomm
Subject: fire fee objection

I am writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

I have two reasons for making this request. First, it would seem to be a subversion of our long-cherished American tradition of not taxing churches. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional principle.

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Thanks,
 Randy Scott

7/16/2008

Randy Scott
NovaMin Technology, Inc.
Phone: 386-418-1551 ext. 125
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NovaMin Technology, Inc. is dedicated to innovations that improve oral health care. Visit us at www.novamin.com,
www.oravive.com and www.remindoneright.com

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Thank you.

NovaMin Technology, Inc.

Young, Shaneka

From: Randy Scott [rscott@novamin.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 2:42 PM
To: citycomm
Subject: fire fee objection

I am writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

I have two reasons for making this request. First, it would seem to be a subversion of our long-cherished American tradition of not taxing churches. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional principle.

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I know my church feeds hundreds of hungry families every year; houses dozens of homeless families every year; provides facilities for voting, middle school graduations, community recreation leagues; we even provide a driveway for use by the neighboring elementary school – all at no cost to the general tax payer base or City/county budget. In regards to the cost of fire protection – that protection directly benefits our members – almost all of whom pay taxes (or fees) for fire support to the City or County.

My suggestion to our Church council would be to merely assess a small “fire fee pass-along charge” to every voter using the facility on election day; every school parent coming to attend a middle school graduation; every elementary school parent dropping their kid off in the morning; every community member using our ball fields; every homeless family spending the night; every boy/girl/cub scout group meeting in our rooms; every non-profit organization that meets in our facilities.....

If we need additional funds for the fire department, then lets just increase the taxes or cut another expense. It will be more palatable, its constitutional and it ends up with the same result: the people of our community paying for the fire protection we need.

Thanks,
Randy Scott

Randy Scott
NovaMin Technology, Inc.
Phone: 386-418-1551 ext. 125
Fax: 386-418-1465

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NovaMin Technology, Inc.

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Randy Scott [rscott@novamin.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 2:37 PM
To: Hanrahan, Pegeen
Subject: Fire fee objection

Dear Ms. Hanrahan,

I am writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

I have two reasons for making this request. First, it would seem to be a subversion of our long-cherished American tradition of not taxing churches. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional principle.

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President/CEO
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NovaMin Technology, Inc.

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Randy Scott [rscott@novamin.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 2:37 PM
To: Hawkins, Jr., Thomas
Subject: fire fee objection

Dear Mr. Hawkins,

I am writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

I have two reasons for making this request. First, it would seem to be a subversion of our long-cherished American tradition of not taxing churches. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional principle.

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NovaMin Technology, Inc.

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Randy Scott [rscott@novamin.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 2:37 PM
To: Mastrodicasa, Jeanna
Subject: fire fee objection

Dear Ms. Mastrodicasa,

I am writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

I have two reasons for making this request. First, it would seem to be a subversion of our long-cherished American tradition of not taxing churches. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional principle.

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7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Randy Scott [rscott@novamin.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 2:37 PM
To: Poe, Lauren B.
Subject: fire fee objection

Dear Ms. Poe,

I am writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

I have two reasons for making this request. First, it would seem to be a subversion of our long-cherished American tradition of not taxing churches. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional principle.

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7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Randy Scott [rscott@novamin.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 2:37 PM
To: Lowe, Craig
Subject: fire fee objection

Dear Mr. Lowe,

I am writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

I have two reasons for making this request. First, it would seem to be a subversion of our long-cherished American tradition of not taxing churches. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional principle.

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7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Randy Scott [rscott@novamin.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 2:37 PM
To: Donovan, John F. - Commissioner
Subject: fire fee objection

Dear Ms. Donovan,

I am writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

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7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Andrew, Devonia L.
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 11:54 AM
To: citycomm
Cc: citymgr
Subject: Citizens James & Kirby Zimmerman letter re: Fire Assessment Fee

Attachments: 22041.pdf



22041.pdf (320 KB)

-----Original Message-----

From: service2@ci.gainesville.fl.us [mailto:service2@ci.gainesville.fl.us]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 12:36 PM
To: Andrew, Devonia L.
Subject: Attached image data.

This is image data from the scanner.

James S. & Kirby E. Zimmerman
611 SW 27th Court
Gainesville, FL 32601
June 20, 2008

2008 JUN 23 PM 3: 22

City of Gainesville
200 E. University Ave.
Gainesville, FL 32601

Attention: Mayor & City Commission

Subject: Special Assessment for Fire Services

This is a letter of objection to the proposed "special assessment", as provided for in your June 25 announcement of public hearings.

We are currently paying about \$3,800 in annual Real Estate taxes, for which we see virtually no services at all. We have several concerns and longer term suggestions regarding the inability of our senior City Management to live within their budgets:

1. 54% of properties in Gainesville are exempt from paying city taxes, from which they benefit. This is a disgrace for a city the size of Gainesville. It's time to change that mix by encouraging more businesses and tax payers.

2. The "additional" \$2+ million should come from better government management:

o **Improve productivity of the current employees.** We saw 5 (five) men and 3 vehicles looking at a GRU transformer the other day. We consistently see 3 or 4 city workers.....one that is working, the others watching. Who knows whether any of them had qualified supervisors or knowledgeable technicians?

o **Find savings through waste, fraud and abuse.** You claim to be trimming costs, but where have you found duplicate services, inefficient productivity and wasteful spending? You need to replace the ambient light sensors that control the street lights.....many are still burning after daylight. Has the city totally converted all it's light bulbs to the efficient, low wattage fluorescent bulbs yet, as GRU has suggested of all homeowners? Replace defective transformers, rather than sending crews to do patch-up repairs (the one close to S. Main St. and SW 29th PL. blows at least 3-4 times a year). Create a challenge, with financial incentives for employees to find ways to reduce costs, improve efficiency (ie: a formal program with suggestion boxes all over the city offices)!

o **Optimize your Transportation Vehicles.** We often see parked city vehicles, without occupants with their engines running. Waste of expensive fuel!! Buy some smaller bus equipment to take advantage of better efficiency during low ridership periods. Think of the energy (with diesel at almost \$5.00/gal) saved by sizing your trips to the number of the riders. With the incredible capabilities of computers these days, this kind of optimization should be a "cakewalk".

o City Beautification is not a top priority, during tough economic times. It's time to eliminate unnecessary expenditures, such as brick-like materials across crosswalks (that are wearing out at an unprecedented rate); circles that go nowhere in the middle of intersections; circles, in general, that provide no value to traffic control; and the extremely expensive trees, planted in the median strip of south Main St. These are just a few of very real examples.

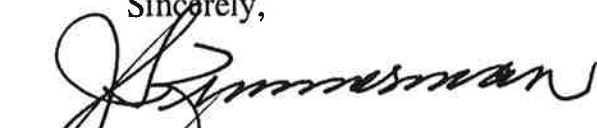
o The \$2+ million is about 10% of your entire revenue. Certainly, you can find 10% that you don't have to dump on our (almost minority) taxpayers.

3. A Special Assessment.....unique by your definition.....why was fire services selected for this provision? Why not roads? Bus services? Library? Police? Trash collection? Anything else that may not be politically astute? Now that you have selected a needed service to the community for this "Special Assessment", what's to prevent you from adding more special assessment taxes in the future to the services we just mentioned?

4. Finally, we don't feel that we should pay for a service which our community hasn't needed in years. We have owned our Kirkwood home (between S. Main and SW 13th St.) for 15 years, have lived her for 10 years and we know of no fire service ever required in Kirkwood (you may correct me if I'm wrong, since I don't have access to the statistics) but I'm sure that Kirkwood must have the lowest incident rate in Gainesville. Why don't you consider assessing fees based on history of incidents and usage? Or charge for specific responses, just as ambulance services are charged? Or collect as a necessary charge from insurance carriers. Besides, we are also paying another \$1,700/year for our fire insurance. By the way, unique, here in Kirkwood, we have a street system, now owned by the city which is deteriorating, primarily because of the damages by GRU's trash contractor. GRU has failed us by not monitoring and correcting their performance. Also, unique to Kirkwood, we don't have city sewage, yet the community has been here since at least 1938 and has paid heavily over these years, for services not received.

These are some reasons we object and suggestions you may use, in lieu of just taxing the eligible (vs. exempt) taxpayers. You may respond, if you like: 371-7922.

Sincerely,



James S. Zimmerman



Kirby E. Zimmerman

cc:ccom
c/mgr

Young, Shaneka

From: Andrew, Devonia L.
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 11:49 AM
To: citycomm
Cc: citymgr; Lannon, Kurt M.
Subject: Citizen William E. Barker letter re: Fire Assessment Fee

Attachments: 22046.pdf



22046.pdf (130 KB)

-----Original Message-----

From: service2@ci.gainesville.fl.us [mailto:service2@ci.gainesville.fl.us]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 12:37 PM
To: Andrew, Devonia L.
Subject: Attached image data.

This is image data from the scanner.

William Barker
3905 NW 34th Place
Gainesville, FL 32606

CITY OF GAINESVILLE
CITY COMMISSION

2008 JUN 23 PM 3: 23

June 20, 2008

Commissioners
City of Gainesville
200 E. University Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32601

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for the "Notice to Property Owner" dated June 25, 2008.

I cannot attend the meeting scheduled for July 16, but I would like my letter read during the meeting because I'm quite sure my sentiments would reflect almost unanimously among the citizenry.

It's easy to cite factors which could necessitate a special assessment -- economic conditions, inflation, budget reductions, non-taxable property, and "everybody does it", Tallahassee, Hollywood, Newberry, Hawthorne, and so on.

This assessment may be necessary, and some reasons are legitimate, but please don't use the ploy of "everybody is doing it". Do you need reasons why this is an asinine and childish argument?

Please, let's confine our expenditures to be proportional to our increased tax base.

Do you not know that people in Gainesville believe the commissioners will use any scheme to wring out additional taxes from the taxpayer. There are more, but I will cite two recent ones that come to mind where there is absolutely no justification.

- a. Landlord tax
- b. The exorbitant 2nd and 3rd call for false alarms (but no assessment for family dispute calls where the time consumed is much greater)

We will not be able to prove that you don't need this assessment, but if we don't have a hissy fit about this, you will invent more. You probably will anyway.

This letter sounds cynical, but I love Gainesville, and I appreciate the good things you do, but please don't get carried away by inflicting more and more taxes. Is this reminiscent of Gibbon's reasons for "The Fall of Rome", "more and more taxes"?

Sincerely yours,



William E. Barker

Copy to Gainesville Sun

CC: CCOM
CLERK
C/MGR

Young, Shaneka

From: Andrew, Devonia L.
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 8:09 AM
To: 'Tony/Rosy Cauterucci'
Cc: citycomm; citymgr
Subject: RE: Fire Fee/Tax

Good Morning,

Your e-mail correspondence has been received by the Mayor and members of the City Commission and it is being shared with the City Manager. Thank you for taking the time to voice your concerns.

Devonia L. Andrew
Executive Assistant to the Mayor

From: Tony/Rosy Cauterucci [mailto:ajcrcc@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 9:35 PM
To: Hanrahan, Pegeen
Subject: Fire Fee/Tax

Dear Ms. Hanrahan:

We are writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

We have two reasons for making this request. First, religious organizations, no matter what their denominational affiliation, have been the guardians and the transmitters of a basic system of values upon which the cohesiveness of our society depends. Our founders clearly considered this a commission that was worthwhile safeguarding. Consequently, they built into our foundational constitutional documents guarantees to keep governments and politicians from impeding or impairing that responsibility. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional right that could forebode future political encroachments that impede the ability of those institutions to function as they should.

Second, a distinguishing characteristic of the organizations mentioned above is economic sharing of their resources and the personal contributions of time and energy of their members for the welfare of the community---normally directly for the welfare of the most needy within our community. However, their economic resources are finite. The payment of the fire tax reduces funds that might normally be used for more altruistic purposes within our county. In effect, by requiring religious organizations to pay the fire tax, the City Commission is forcing them into a zero sum situation that over the long run can have deleterious effects on the persons in our community who are traditionally overlooked and ignored by governmental

7/16/2008

institutions.

Our founders clearly recognized the dangers to community and society that come when religious organizations are subjected to political and economic pressures. As concerned citizens, we want to urge you once again to reconsider imposing the fire tax on religious organizations.

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Cauterucci

Rosalba C. Cauterucci

Young, Shaneka

From: Tony/Rosy Cauterucci [ajcrrc@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 9:40 PM
To: Lowe, Craig
Subject: Fire Fee/Tax

Dear Mr. Lowe:

We are writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

We have two reasons for making this request. First, religious organizations, no matter what their denominational affiliation, have been the guardians and the transmitters of a basic system of values upon which the cohesiveness of our society depends. Our founders clearly considered this a commission that was worthwhile safeguarding. Consequently, they built into our foundational constitutional documents guarantees to keep governments and politicians from impeding or impairing that responsibility. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional right that could forebode future political encroachments that impede the ability of those institutions to function as they should.

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Our founders clearly recognized the dangers to community and society that come when religious organizations are subjected to political and economic pressures. As concerned citizens, we want to urge you once again to reconsider imposing the fire tax on religious organizations.

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Cauterucci

Rosalba C. Cauterucci

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Tony/Rosy Cauterucci [ajcrrc@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 9:39 PM
To: Donovan, John F. - Commissioner
Subject: Fire Fee/Tax

Dear Mr. Donovan:

We are writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

We have two reasons for making this request. First, religious organizations, no matter what their denominational affiliation, have been the guardians and the transmitters of a basic system of values upon which the cohesiveness of our society depends. Our founders clearly considered this a commission that was worthwhile safeguarding. Consequently, they built into our foundational constitutional documents guarantees to keep governments and politicians from impeding or impairing that responsibility. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional right that could forebode future political encroachments that impede the ability of those institutions to function as they should.

Second, a distinguishing characteristic of the organizations mentioned above is economic sharing of their resources and the personal contributions of time and energy of their members for the welfare of the community---normally directly for the welfare of the most needy within our community. However, their economic resources are finite. The payment of the fire tax reduces funds that might normally be used for more altruistic purposes within our county. In effect, by requiring religious organizations to pay the fire tax, the City Commission is forcing them into a zero sum situation that over the long run can have deleterious effects on the persons in our community who are traditionally overlooked and ignored by governmental institutions.

Our founders clearly recognized the dangers to community and society that come when religious organizations are subjected to political and economic pressures. As concerned citizens, we want to urge you once again to reconsider imposing the fire tax on religious organizations.

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Cauterucci

Rosalba C. Cauterucci

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Tony/Rosy Cauterucci [ajcrcc@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 9:38 PM
To: Poe, Lauren B.
Subject: Fire Fee/Tax

Dear Ms. Poe:

We are writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

We have two reasons for making this request. First, religious organizations, no matter what their denominational affiliation, have been the guardians and the transmitters of a basic system of values upon which the cohesiveness of our society depends. Our founders clearly considered this a commission that was worthwhile safeguarding. Consequently, they built into our foundational constitutional documents guarantees to keep governments and politicians from impeding or impairing that responsibility. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional right that could forebode future political encroachments that impede the ability of those institutions to function as they should.

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Sincerely,

Anthony J. Cauterucci

Rosalba C. Cauterucci

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Tony/Rosy Cauterucci [ajcrrc@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 9:38 PM
To: Henry, Scherwin L.
Subject: Fire Fee/Tax

Dear Mr. Scherwin:

We are writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

We have two reasons for making this request. First, religious organizations, no matter what their denominational affiliation, have been the guardians and the transmitters of a basic system of values upon which the cohesiveness of our society depends. Our founders clearly considered this a commission that was worthwhile safeguarding. Consequently, they built into our foundational constitutional documents guarantees to keep governments and politicians from impeding or impairing that responsibility. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional right that could forebode future political encroachments that impede the ability of those institutions to function as they should.

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Sincerely,

Anthony J. Cauterucci

Rosalba C. Cauterucci

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Tony/Rosy Cauterucci [ajcrrc@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 9:37 PM
To: Mastrodicasa, Jeanna
Subject: FireFee/Tax

Dear Ms. Mastrodicasa:

We are writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

We have two reasons for making this request. First, religious organizations, no matter what their denominational affiliation, have been the guardians and the transmitters of a basic system of values upon which the cohesiveness of our society depends. Our founders clearly considered this a commission that was worthwhile safeguarding. Consequently, they built into our foundational constitutional documents guarantees to keep governments and politicians from impeding or impairing that responsibility. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional right that could forebode future political encroachments that impede the ability of those institutions to function as they should.

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Sincerely,

Anthony J. Cauterucci

Rosalba C. Cauterucci

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Tony/Rosy Cauterucci [ajcrrc@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 9:36 PM
To: Hawkins, Jr., Thomas
Subject: Fire Fee/Tax

Dear Mr. Hawkins:

We are writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

We have two reasons for making this request. First, religious organizations, no matter what their denominational affiliation, have been the guardians and the transmitters of a basic system of values upon which the cohesiveness of our society depends. Our founders clearly considered this a commission that was worthwhile safeguarding. Consequently, they built into our foundational constitutional documents guarantees to keep governments and politicians from impeding or impairing that responsibility. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional right that could forebode future political encroachments that impede the ability of those institutions to function as they should.

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Sincerely,

Anthony J. Cauterucci

Rosalba C. Cauterucci

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Tony/Rosy Cauterucci [ajcrrc@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 9:35 PM
To: Hanrahan, Pegeen
Subject: Fire Fee/Tax

Dear Ms. Hanrahan:

We are writing to urge you to rescind or reduce to zero the fire fee on churches, synagogues, mosques and other similar organizations.

We have two reasons for making this request. First, religious organizations, no matter what their denominational affiliation, have been the guardians and the transmitters of a basic system of values upon which the cohesiveness of our society depends. Our founders clearly considered this a commission that was worthwhile safeguarding. Consequently, they built into our foundational constitutional documents guarantees to keep governments and politicians from impeding or impairing that responsibility. Call it what you will, the fire fee is a euphemism for a tax on those organizations that in our country, our state and our county have traditionally and constitutionally been exempt from the threat of political influence and control. The fire tax is an intrusion on that constitutional right that could forebode future political encroachments that impede the ability of those institutions to function as they should.

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Sincerely,

Anthony J. Cauterucci

Rosalba C. Cauterucci

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Andrew, Devonia L.
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 8:43 AM
To: 'Nathan Collier'
Cc: citycomm
Subject: RE: Mayor! Not fair for apts to pay same Fire Fee as Single Family - Apts much less sq ft, much more compact, easier to serve and all new communities have sprinkler systems and built in fire alarms which single family lack...

Good Morning Mr. Collier,

Your e-mail correspondence has been received by the Mayor and it is being shared with the other members of the City Commission. Thank you for taking the time to voice your concerns.

Devonia L. Andrew
 Executive Assistant to the Mayor

From: Nathan Collier [mailto:ncollier@teamparadigm.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 8:06 AM
To: Hanrahan, Pegeen
Cc: Phil Emmer; Ken McGurn; Greg Trunnell; Jdpfla@aol.com; Clayton Kallman; Kyle Riva; Tom Mallini; Robert McArthur; Blackburn, Russ D.; Keith Colgan; John Marti; Sonia Fox
Subject: Mayor! Not fair for apts to pay same Fire Fee as Single Family - Apts much less sq ft, much more compact, easier to serve and all new communities have sprinkler systems and built in fire alarms which single family lack...

Mayor!

Not fair for apts to pay same Fire Fee as Single Family -

- Apts have much, much less sq footage than single family homes
- Apts much more compact on a per unit basis, easier to serve and
- All new communities have sprinkler systems, virtually no single family do and
- Built in fire alarms/smoke detectors which many single family lack...
- Single Family already subsidized by Homestead exemption (tax break for more affluent home owner v. traditional less affluent renter)
- Flat Tax = Regressive Tax on renters, a lower economic demographic strata
- When first put in, City's Stormwater Management Fee on apts was less than 50% of rate on single family.
- Apartments much, much more environmentally friendly lifestyle, so why punish/discourage?
- units to left and right, top and bottom form PERFECT insulation,
- cost much less to heat/cool AND

7/16/2008

- generally half the sq ft per occupant

If the City truly wishes to walk it's talk re wanting to halt urban sprawl and encourage environmentally friendly lifestyles than its tax policy must reflect that commitment.

Young, Shaneka

From: Williams, Constance N. on behalf of Rountree, Becky L.
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 8:29 AM
To: clerks
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update - Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

From: Williams, Constance N. on behalf of Rountree, Becky L.
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 8:29 AM
To: Lowe, Craig
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update - Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

From: Williams, Constance N. on behalf of Rountree, Becky L.
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 8:28 AM
To: clerks
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update - Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

From: Williams, Constance N. on behalf of Rountree, Becky L.
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 8:28 AM
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Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update - Proposed Fire Assessment

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From: Williams, Constance N. on behalf of Rountree, Becky L.
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 8:28 AM
To: Donovan, John F. - Commissioner
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update -Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

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Subject: Mayor! Not fair for apts to pay same Fire Fee as Single Family - Apts much less sq ft, much more compact, easier to serve and all new communities have sprinkler systems and built in fire alarms which single family lack...

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- cost much less to heat/cool AND
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If the City truly wishes to walk it's talk re wanting to halt urban sprawl and encourage environmentally friendly lifestyles than its tax policy must reflect that commitment.

Young, Shaneka

From: Andrew, Devonia L.
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 6:50 AM
To: 'jimgrisham1'
Cc: citycomm
Subject: RE: Proposed Application of the Special Fire Assessment to Churches and Other Non-Profits

Good Morning Mr. Grisham,

Your e-mail correspondence has been received by the Mayor and members of the City Commission. Thank you for your time in this matter.

Devonia L. Andrew
Executive Assistant to the Mayor

From: jimgrisham1 [mailto:jimgrisham1@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 12:28 AM
To: Hanrahan, Pegeen; Hawkins, Jr., Thomas; Mastrodicasa, Jeanna; Henry, Scherwin L.; Poe, Lauren B.; Donovan, John F. - Commissioner; Lowe, Craig; citymgr
Subject: Proposed Application of the Special Fire Assessment to Churches and Other Non-Profits

Dear Mayor Hanrahan, Commissioners Hawkins, Henry, Mastrodij, Poe, Donovan, Lowe & Manager Blackburn:

I am writing as both a concerned citizen and a Christian who is a member of Trinity United Methodist church.

Dr. Dan Johnson, the senior pastor of Trinity United Methodist church, has written a letter to the Gainesville Sun and appeared on WCJB to voice his opposition of the proposed application of the fire assessment to Gainesville churches and other non-profits.

I support Dr. Johnson and other Gainesville pastors fully in their opposition to the application of the proposed special fire assessment to Gainesville's churches and non-profits.

The state of Florida and its subdivisions have a long history of not imposing taxes and fees on churches. This is not the time to break with this tradition. As Ron Cunningham noted in his Gainesville Sun editorial of May 29 - "Churches and other nonprofits feed the hungry, unite broken families, shelter abused women and children and perform a host of other services that would otherwise have to be financed with public tax dollars . . . Gainesville doesn't have to assess nonprofits - themselves providers of indispensable community services - to keep its fire department adequately funded. I hope that you will amend the proposed fire assessment fee legislation to fully exempt Gainesville's churches and non-profit organizations.

7/16/2008

Thank you for reading my comments.

Jim Grisham
4003 NW 60th Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32653

Young, Shaneka

From: jimgrisham1 [jimgrisham1@cox.net]

Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2008 12:28 AM

To: Hanrahan, Pegeen; Hawkins, Jr., Thomas; Mastrodicasa, Jeanna; Henry, Scherwin L.; Poe, Lauren B.; Donovan, John F. - Commissioner; Lowe, Craig; citymgr

Subject: Proposed Application of the Special Fire Assessment to Churches and Other Non-Profits

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Thank you for reading my comments.

Jim Grisham
4003 NW 60th Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32653

7/16/2008

Young, Shaneka

From: Driggers, Kathlene S. on behalf of Northcutt, William K.
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2008 4:37 PM
To: clerks
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update - Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

From: Driggers, Kathlene S. on behalf of Northcutt, William K.
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2008 4:37 PM
To: Lowe, Craig
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update - Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

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Sent: Monday, June 23, 2008 4:37 PM
To: Donovan, John F. - Commissioner
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update -Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

From: Driggers, Kathlene S.
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2008 4:37 PM
To: Donovan, John F. - Commissioner
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update -Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

From: Harris, Helen J.
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2008 4:30 PM
To: clerks
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update - Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

From: Harris, Helen J.
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2008 4:30 PM
To: Lowe, Craig
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update - Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

From: Harris, Helen J. on behalf of Folkers, Paul E.
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2008 4:30 PM
To: clerks
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update - Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

From: Harris, Helen J. on behalf of Folkers, Paul E.
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2008 4:30 PM
To: Lowe, Craig
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update - Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

From: Harris, Helen J.
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2008 4:28 PM
To: Donovan, John F. - Commissioner
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update - Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

From: Harris, Helen J. on behalf of Folkers, Paul E.
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2008 4:28 PM
To: Donovan, John F. - Commissioner
Subject: Accepted: Updated: Update -Proposed Fire Assessment

Young, Shaneka

From: Brian Scarborough [brian@scarins.com]
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2008 3:45 PM
To: Mastrodicasa, Jeanna
Subject: RE: Fire Service Special Assessment

Thanks for the reply, Jeanna. I think this fire assessment stinks. In terms of the CEO money that the city pledged, I know what you mean. But the irony is that the CEO money is supposed to be used to attract new employers and jobs. The more fees the commission tacks onto businesses the less attractive the city becomes.

Brian Scarborough, CIC, REBC
Scarborough Company Insurance, Inc.
2811 NW 41 Street
Gainesville, FL 32606
352.377.2002, ext. 131
352.376.8393- fax

-----Original Message-----

From: Mastrodicasa, Jeanna [mailto:mastrodij@cityofgainesville.org]
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2008 11:37 AM
To: Brian Scarborough
Subject: RE: Fire Service Special Assessment

Hi Brian,
thank you for your comments and input on the fire assessment and our budget. As the city commission goes through our budgeting process during the month of July, I appreciate your specific suggestions as we consider them and make recommendations for the next fiscal year.

I believe that we are taking a hard look at the future of Ironwood as part of the city's recreation already, and we are going to be making a decision in the next few years about its viability. (I believe it's not part of this year's budget discussion due to the impending development around it--which may change the impact of its value drastically).

The University of Florida's position on fire assessment fees is that they already contribute a great deal to this community and they do not intend to pay for fire services (and have already paid \$800,000 for a fire truck). This Monday afternoon will offer an update to the fire assessment issue with UF and I think you can hear that this issue is pretty much at a stalemate. In fact I just returned from College Station, Texas, attending a conference about campus/community relations--and I couldn't find another campus which paid for fire services. I can say that I am inspired by the conference to work more closely with the university on mutually beneficial goals, especially related to economic development.

With half of our property off the tax rolls, we do not have many options to gain fiscal support from those agencies without some different support at the state level. In fact, the funds for the current \$18 M in the Campus Development Agreement--which is a multi-year agreement--are still in existence after this budget year at the legislature but these are the types of funds that the state legislature are trimming back out of its bleak budget.

Finally, on your point of "nice to do" and "have to do," and for you serving a member of the Chamber's Public Policy Committee, I would say that some of the funds we use to support local economic development through the CEO and GTEC is considered "nice to do" by many of our citizens and it's just one of many options we have to consider. I hear many negative comments about that level of support. Just like UF, the Chamber considers itself to be an economic engine but not everyone sees it the same way.

I really do appreciate your specific suggestions and we are working on some of them already. We'll be doing the formal budgeting process throughout July and I hope you remain active in the process. I look forward to your input--most of our citizens don't get involved despite this being one of the most important things we do as a commission.

thanks again!
Jeanna

From: Brian Scarborough [mailto:brian@scarins.com]
Sent: Wed 6/18/2008 2:28 PM
To: citycomm
Subject: Fire Service Special Assessment

Madame Mayor & Commissioners: I serve on the Chamber of Commerce's Public Policy Committee and we heard a presentation from City and GFR staff yesterday regarding the proposed special assessment for fire services. I'm writing you today to voice my opposition to the Assessment both as a resident and business owner in the City. I object to the basic notion that there should be a special assessment for such a fundamental public service as fire protection. We rely upon you and staff to prioritize the expenditures of the City. It is unacceptable to me that you cannot locate another internal source for the \$2Million that this Assessment is supposed to raise.

I'm not one to complain about all taxes/fees. I understand that worthwhile government services cost money. But I also know that times are tough in our community right now. I see it from my clients every day. Every business I know is down from last year. Is now really the best time to be introducing a new fee to not only your property owners but also your churches and non-profits? I also know that the City's projected revenue is down and would like to offer some potential sources of savings in lieu of a new tax (aka Assessment)-

1. Sell Ironwood. A city in financial trouble can't afford a luxury (and money pit) like a golf course. Meadowbrook and Turkey Creek have changed hands 3-4 different times in the last 10 years because they leak money like a sieve. And those were in good financial times. If someone doesn't want to operate it as a golf course, maybe they'd like to consider some affordable housing development.

2. Cut staff. Our company employs 25 people. At least 2 of them perform functions that are non-essential, they're a luxury. We keep them around because they're nice people and we can afford them at this point. If business continues to go the way it has for 6 months we may no longer be able to afford them. I can only imagine the number of "luxury" positions that an organization of your size has. Based on the 07 budget the Equal Opportunity Office gets \$500K, the Risk Management Dept gets \$885K, HR gets over \$1M, Community Development gets almost \$5M, Budget & Finance gets \$2.78M and RTS gets over \$9M. None of those departments offer services as important as GFR.

3. Privatize where possible. For example, return to contracting with the County's Environmental Protection Department to provide those services in the City. They've tripled in size over the last 10 years so I'm certain they can handle it. Many of my clients with large vehicle fleets have captured significant savings by privatizing their fleet maintenance (I believe Enterprise is the most recognized vendor).

4. Revitalize efforts to get fire protection funds out of UF. Point out that starting their own fire department could be tough in this lean year.

5. Don't accept a contract with the airport for fire service if it loses money. The good news about the airport is if there's a fire it is unlikely to endanger anyone.

In closing, I want to revisit the first slide that we saw in yesterday's presentation. It said in 1975 there were 165 personnel in GFR servicing 65,000 citizens and 26 sq. miles. Now they have 10 less staffers (155 personnel) and service double the population (122,700) and territory (over 60 sq. miles). I guarantee there's no other department in the City that has doubled their capacity for service while cutting staff. How about leaving the GFR budget alone and find places to cut in other departments? All of your citizenry is prioritizing their budgets and they don't have the option of simply voting in a new revenue source. You shouldn't either.

Thanks for your service to our great City.

Brian Scarborough, CIC, REBC
Scarborough Company Insurance, Inc.

2811 NW 41 Street

Gainesville, FL 32606

352.377.2002, ext. 131

352.376.8393- fax