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Buckhead's contractor did sewer work after city's OK in December

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The sanitary sewer extension built for the proposed high-rise at 1717 Bissonnet St. was installed by a contractor rather than by the city of Houston, after a utilities analysis was approved in December.

The construction, which took place between April and June, was part of a routine process that precedes the issuance of a building permit, a spokesman for the Public Works Department said.

"Before a developer can have his plan reviewed or obtain a building permit on his development, he must first submit a utility capacity reservation application," staff analyst Robert Medina said in an e-mail.

Applications outline the type and size of development and, in the case of the filing by developer Buckhead Investment Partners Inc. in November, resulted in the city requiring that improvements be made.

City records show a contractor

installed about 1,000 feet of 10-inch sanitary sewer, because the system lacked the capacity to support a 23-floor high-rise.

"The city inspected and accepted the line after it was completed," Medina said.

Public Works said at the going rate of \$85 a linear foot, the cost to the developer should not have approached the \$500,000 figure cited by Councilwoman Anne Clutterbuck at the public meeting held

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Sept. 21 at Poe Elementary School.

Clutterbuck's office said Monday that number was provided to her by the developers.

However, Medina said, "The sewer extension was entirely fund-

ed by the developer and, therefore, the city has no information on the cost or payments."

In addition, Buckhead qualified to apply for a developer participation contract that would have required the city to pay 30 percent of the cost for the improvements. The developer did not do so.

By building a sewer line as part of satisfying a utility analysis, developers qualify to apply for a private service charge.

This requires anyone who connects to the sewer line to pay the developer a prorated share of the construction cost. City records show Buckhead did not apply for a PSC.