



# Big Bear GRIZZLY

## Fee review is ordered by BBL City Council

By JUDI BOWERS

Big Bear Lake City Council is looking into raising fees.

The council approved two items at its Aug. 27 meeting related to fees and recovery of costs for service. The city will spend \$26,500 to do a development impact fee study, which focuses on the impact development has on city infrastructure.

Kelly Ent, director of administrative services for the city, said development impact fees can only be used to increase capacity for the city such as roads. The revenue can't be used for routine maintenance. However, city attorney Stephen Deitsch said development impact fees can be used for capital improvement projects and may be used to purchase certain equipment such as fire engines. Deitsch suggested the council have Revenue Cost Specialists, the firm doing the fee study, include a report on what the fees can be used for.

Councilwoman Liz Harris asked about a project the Big Bear Lake Fire Department and the Forest Service were looking at to dispose of material generated from the chipping program. Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency was first approached, but it was determined sludge couldn't be used with the equipment. Harris said if the city's vegetation reduction plan is successful, there will be a need for a place to dispose of the chips.

Deitsch said it's possible a building for the equipment Harris mentioned could be paid for with developer fees.

The second study regarding fees will also be done by Revenue Cost Specialists. That study will review fees for services provided by the city, Ent said. Increases in fees are imposed regularly based on the consumer price index, but the fees are not high enough to cover costs incurred by the city, she said.

Ent used the private home rental permit fee as an example. The fee doesn't cover the cost of enforcement, she said. Any increase in fees will be department specific, she said.

Ent asked for \$29,000 for the service fee study, but the cost will increase because the council asked for additional information. The City Council asked that the firm review the transient occupancy tax rate as part of the study. Harris said the firm needs to take the relationship between the city and Big Bear Lake Resort Association into consideration. The RA also collects TOT from member lodges.

"It's time we have a look at it," Harris said about the TOT.

The council approved funding both studies and will allocate the additional funds for the TOT study at a later date. Ent said the studies should be complete by the end of summer. City Manager Jeff Mathieu said fee increases should be before the City Council for consideration when the midyear budget is presented. That is usually after the first of the year.

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