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CARD wants to review fee implementation stints

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CHICO — Higher park impact fees are the goal, but how long it takes the Chico Area Recreation and Park District to raise the fees is under discussion.

A Bay Area consultant came back to the CARD board Thursday with a new set of fees after board members observed the first set was very high.

The consultant is expected back next month with a report comparing the fees under a five- and 10-year implementation plan after board members observed the troubled economy should be considered.

Consultant Blair Aas of SCI Consulting of Fairfield said the study and fees reflected a less ambitious master plan. As proposed, the fee on a single family residence would rise in Chico and Butte County from \$2,913 and \$2,375 respectively to \$5,885 each, lower than the original \$6,281.

Over a 10-year period, the increase would amount to about \$300 a year.

The park impact fee on new multi-family dwellings in Chico is proposed at \$4,753, rather than \$5,073 first suggested. Currently it is \$2,465 in the city and \$2,375 in the county.

The mobile home development fee was dropped to \$4,753, from \$5,073.

And a fee on an additional residential unit — what's

called a mother-in-law unit — was suggested at \$2,263 rather than \$2,416 in the first draft. The mother-in-law unit fee is new.

Per the directors, the proposed fee on commercial construction was dropped. CARD General Manager Steve Visconti said if the fees are phased in, the board will have to vote on each

incremental increase.

CARD Chair Fred Brooks said the increases actually amount to only a few dollars a year to a homeowner, but also means the community can benefit from quality recreational assets the increases would make possible.

Brooks said he preferred a five-year implementation, but "could live" with 10. However, he said phasing in the fee would delay improvements "for a generation."

"Pushing (the fee implementation) to 10 years could delay construction on some facilities," Visconti said, noting the fee is only placed on new construction, which is sluggish right now.

"We need an economic rebound to have anything," observed Director Jan Sneed. Vice Chair Mark Sweany, who suggested a 10-year phase-in, noted, "Contractors need to finance this up front. If we can give them something steady and planable when the economy starts up again, that's better."


Park impact fees are collected by both the city and county on new apartment and home construction, and CARD will have to ask both governments to implement the increases.

CARD began talking about higher park impact fees

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after a nexus study was done for the recreation district's master plan, which identified various improvements and new projects to be made over the next 20 years. The fees, along with other revenue sources, will help pay for the improvements, which CARD said is needed because of the city's projected population increase.

No one from the public commented on the proposed increases, which must also be adopted by the city and county. Previously, Visconti said either body might not approve the increases, and has the authority to adjust the rates. The board also briefly talked about creating a district-wide maintenance district to help pay for DeGarmo Community Park, noting it would take a vote of households in the district.

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