

School district reduces developer impact fees

by Press-Banner

05.21.09 - 05:34 pm

The fees that developers have to pay Scotts Valley Unified School District are being cut almost in half, but not because Mayor Randy Johnson protested them publicly last December.

School officials informed city leaders at an April committee meeting that the developer fee, currently set at \$6.31 per square foot for a new house or apartment building, will be reduced to \$3.27. The new amount was affirmed by the school board May 12.

The fee is charged to help pay for school facilities that presumably will be needed for the increased school enrollment generated by a development. The district uses the funds raised to help pay lease expenses for portable classrooms at the various schools.

Johnson had showed up at a school board meeting Dec. 9 and criticized the board for hiking the fee from \$4.15 to \$6.31, saying such a high fee discourages development in the city.

He also said the city was unaware of the increase when it was enacted seven months earlier, but Superintendent Susan Silver told trustees that a letter notifying the city of the hike had been hand-delivered at the time.

The fee is set annually. To determine this year's level, the district hired the Dolinka Group, an Irvine-based consultant different from the one who conducted the study a year earlier. In addition, the state formula used to calculate the fee changed, school leaders said.

Johnson, who was present at the April meeting when the new fee amount was disclosed, was pleased.

“Any time you do anything that lowers costs for developers, that’s a plus,” he said.

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