

# ChicoER.com

## City Consultant advises sticking to facts

By Mary Weston/Staff Writer

Article Launched: 03/14/2008 07:57:50 PM PDT

The city's consultant blamed the impact fee argument on "bifurcation of the park system," Thursday night, saying the conversation should first focus on the process of setting impact fees rather than the resulting fee.

The meeting was a four-hour rehash of the impact fee issue that's gone on for nearly a year, at a joint meeting of City Council and Feather River Recreation and Park District.

The argument boils down to two issues: The Feather River Recreation and Park District asked the city to approve a mechanism for developers to pay impact fees directly to the FRRPD early in 2007. The city wants to collect all the park impact fees and retain control over the fees deciding which projects the city deems most beneficial to the community.

Thursday night, the FRRPD board said the city's six-page ordinance taking complete control over all park impact fees is unacceptable.

However, one City Councilmen said it wouldn't be a problem if FRRPD wasn't paranoid about the city. Some City Council members, however, were afraid FRRPD might spend impact fees inappropriately and the city would be accountable.

Other councilmen said duplicate fees might be collected and city residents would pay a double fee, if a fee were collected for the city and the park district.

Consultant Scott Thorpe took the middle road,

saying both the city and FRRPD have neighborhood parks and community parks, which is why there has been some disagreement over collecting park impact fees.

He said methods of impact fee calculation would resolve questions about duplicating fees.

"It could be put into a formula," Thorpe said.

The simplified formula for impact fees is divide the park acreage an agency operates by the existing population. This gives the agency's existing level of service, the magic number for determining impact fees by determining the level of service the agency would provide to new residents.

The equation for calculating Quimby Act land dedications is the total park acreage an agency operates divided by 1000.

Thorpe said the impact fee conversation should focus more on the rules and requirements for impact fees rather than the resulting fees, which can be lowered or raised at the end of the day by policy decisions.

The focus should be on parks masterplans for both agencies, with at least collaboration on parks within the city and the park district.

A decision should be made on city's Quimby Act land dedications and in lieu-of fees to determine how many acres should be set aside for neighborhood parks, and how many acres FRRPD has that serve new residents.

Secondly, the city's nexus study could be reduced to reflect the actual level of service the city provides, which would reduce the city's impact fee. The city's level of service was increased to 3 acres from about 2.9 in the nexus study for

Advertisement



A bright idea in online advertising.

PrinterStitial® ads by Format Dynamics.



FormatDynamics®

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

# ChicoER.com

Quimby Act land dedications, as that is the minimum required. The park district's nexus study, however is based on the actual existing level of service.

Third, the agencies could look at the 2003 nexus studies. Issues of accountability, which are built into the reporting requirements for AB-1600 are also relevant. Agencies have to report the amount of fees collected, the beginning balance, how the fees were spent and the ending balance in the park impact fee fund, Thorpe said.

City Council would be accountable to city residents, and the elected park district board would be accountable not only to city residents but to all the residents within the park district.

Ultimately, the city and the district would have to come together and make sense of the services provided by each agency. What's complicated, Thorpe said, is the discussion about both agencies having some similar parks. "It's not about the fee." "That's not complicated.

In the end, City Council formed an ad-hoc committee of Mayor Steve Jernigan, City Councilwoman Sue Corkin and City Councilman Mike Howard to discuss concerns with the FRRPD ad-hoc committee comprised of board chair Monique Gurr, vice chair Jan Hill and board member Loren Gill.

The board submitted a letter to City Council at the meeting saying they want the park impact fee via an ordinance not via oversight of City Council, they want a fair share of the impact fee, and they want control over how the fees are used within legal guidelines.

Mayor Steve Jernigan agreed the city shouldn't micromanage another agency, and said there should be another way to handle accountability.

"Then just give us our fee," said FRRPD General Manager Bob Sharkey.

However, Johansson and City Councilman Jim Prouty were adamant that the City Council retain control over how the fee was spent and what projects FRRPD could do. Johansson said the city feared the district, calling it paranoia.

However, Prouty, Corkin and Jernigan all agreed the language in the city's resolution was too strong, such as the fees could be distributed at the "sole discretion" of council, and Prouty had asked administration to revise the resolution.

Audience member Kent Fowler said although he wasn't taking sides, he would like to see a better relationship between the agencies.

"I would like to see a better cooperation between the city of Oroville, FRRPD and Bob Sharkey," Fowler said. "I don't understand the hostility."

## Advertisement

A bright idea in online advertising.  
PrinterStitial® ads by Format Dynamics.

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™