



Portage parks want impact fee reinstated

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PORTAGE | The Park Board on Monday night recommended the reinstating of the recreational impact fee.

The fee was approved several years ago, but elapsed in 2011, Park Superintendent Jenny Orsburn said.

She asked the board to approve adopting the fee again. The \$700 per lot fee would be charged to developers for residential construction. The funds are used for park improvements and development.

Before it expired, the fee had raised about \$80,000. It was targeted then to pay for a variety of improvements at parks, but hasn't been spent.

Orsburn recommended the use now be targeted for multiuse trails and open space in the parks. She also recommended that the fee be reduced by 50 percent for the first two years of a five-year period so that the city could use it as an incentive for builders.

Because of the lack of residential construction in the city the last few years, the department did not lose much money by allowing the fee to lapse, Orsburn said.

The recommendation must be reviewed by the city attorney before being sent to the city's Plan Commission and City Council for final improvement.

The board also gave its blessing for the installation of 911 signs in the parks.

Orsburn signs would be installed in various parks and include GPS tagging. This would allow officials to find the location of a 911 caller.

The idea is being promoted by the Porter County Parks Department for all parks in the county. Orsburn said the county department is seeking funding for the project, so the Portage department would face only the cost of installing the signs.