

Clock ticking for committee to recommend field upgrades

By Anne Knowles

In the end, it may come down to the difference between wish lists and must haves.

The Fields Advisory Committee of the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority meets today for the final time before making its recommendation on how to allocate money to fix up South Lake Tahoe fields used for baseball, softball and soccer.



Dugouts are just one issue with the softball field at South Tahoe High School. Photo/LTN file

The committee meets at 4pm at Lake Tahoe Airport, where members will discuss how to spend \$500,000 of Measure R funds on all or some of the fields at South Tahoe Middle School, Al Tahoe, Sierra House School, Meyers Magnet School, and the South Tahoe High School softball field. The committee's recommendation will be delivered to the JPA at its meeting on July 27.

On a public field trip to the various sites July 2, there seemed to be committee consensus that the priority should be finishing the high school softball field first, although there was a difference of opinion on how extensive the work should be there.

From \$40,000 to \$60,000 more is needed to complete construction of the field and to add permanent fencing, a flagpole and a public address system, said Sue Novasel, a Lake Tahoe Unified School District board member.

Those additions, Novasel believes, would bring the city into Title IX compliance.

"Those are the three things I think that are needed to put the field on par with the boys," said Novasel.

So far, construction on the field, including dugouts, has cost about \$154,000, said Novasel, and the school board at its last meeting approved up \$160,000.

During the field trip, committee member Marilyn Breisacher and Steve Morales, facilities director for the district, locked horns over a "wish list" of additional items for the high school softball field.

Breisacher presented a rendering of the field that included shortening the dugout to give people sitting in the bleachers better visibility of the bases as well as a plan to raise the floor in the announcers' booth.

"I couldn't justify it," said Morales, referring to the changes in the dugout. "I believe we created line of sight."

The committee also visited several other fields and discussed plans for them that included overhauling the Al Tahoe Fields with a new, full-size baseball field, upgrades to the two Little League fields, and a replacement T-ball field as well as a scorer's booth and bleachers at the South Tahoe Middle

School softball field.

The fields committee will make its final recommendation at the JPA meeting on July 27 at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport.