

Council tweaking fees throughout S. Tahoe



Rates at Bijou Golf Course are likely going up this summer. Photo/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

It can cost more to file an appeal with the city of South Lake Tahoe than what the original fee or fine was. The City Council wants to change that policy.

At Tuesday's meeting the four (Councilman Hal Cole was out of town) directed staff to bring back a code amendment that would redefine how appeals are handled. This includes the possibility of having the appeal fee reduced or abolished if the applicant were to "win" their case. Appeal fees might also have more of a sliding scale based on what the original fee was.

Hilary Roverud, assistant director of Community Development, said a couple appeals a year is normal, but none has come forward since the price was raised last year to \$3,000.

This was all part of a larger discussion March 15 about the master fee schedule. Annually the council reviews the fees. A vote on the fees will be at the next meeting.

Going forward the fees will be tied to a consumer price index, which is currently at 1.0318 percent.

"We recommend not changing the recreation fees at this time," Mark Carlson, assistant city manager, told the council. He said this is because of the condition of the facilities and based on participation. If the rec center is overhauled, that would be the time to look at a different fee structure, he said.

However, it will cost more to play a round of golf at Bijou Golf Course. The fee for nine holes will be \$18 instead of \$15. Going down, though, is the price of a season pass for youth.

While staff proposed keeping the campground fees the same, Councilman Tom Davis successfully lobbied his colleagues to consider raising them for summer 2017. This will be discussed further when the whole schedule comes back for a vote.

His reasoning is that if it sells out each year, even with conditions less than ideal, the demand is such that people will pay a few more dollars per night. He wants that added revenue dedicated for campground improvements. It is estimated the needed upgrades just to the bathrooms would cost \$1 million.

The city has been hesitant to make substantive improvements to Campground by the Lake because the land is owned by El Dorado County and negotiations are under way regarding that parcel's future.

Davis left the room while the remaining three discussed airport hangar fees because he rents one.

The assistant city manager said the city is significantly below market when it comes to the cost to rent a hangar for non-aviation use. The goal is to get the price to 75 cents per square foot. The first increase will be to get the cost halfway there.

Carlson said the city is likely to need a couple more hangars for transient aircraft. If the added expense for people using them for storage doesn't get them to leave, it's possible the city will have to ask some people to move.

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In other news:

- Councilman Austin Sass is looking into having a debate or forum between proponents of the loop road and those who are against it, namely the people seeking to put it on the ballot.

- **Mid-year budget** adjustments were approved.

- Chad Donnelly, SnowGlobe producer, was granted \$4,500 in reimbursement for the additional transit for this past year's music festival. The council denied his request for \$9,231.40 for garbage disposal. The vote was 3-1, with Councilwoman JoAnn Conner believing the city gives him enough already, especially with the three-day event generating more cash via additional ticket sales.