

ARD considers impact fees

Nexus Study provides tool

By Bruce Warren Journal Staff Writer



Bruce Warren/Auburn Journal

Kate Kirsh speaks to ARD board members about the Nexus Study, which will help ARD determine future fees.

The Auburn Recreation District will get help from a new tool in determining future costs of acquiring and maintaining parkland.

Draft status of the Nexus Study was presented by Kate Kirsh of Foothill Associates at Thursday night's ARD meeting. According to one page of the study, parkland acquisition would require \$781 in annual costs per person, while parkland development would cost \$1,500 per person. Major facilities would cost \$1,081 per person in order to meet the demands necessitated by projected population growth.

"These are fees for new residents to ensure we maintain an acceptable level of recreation facilities," said Scott Holbrook, ARD director, in an interview Friday.

Builders and developers would pay fees once they are implemented, but city and county officials will be contacted first in regards to issuing permits, according to Holbrook.

"Any time you bring in new people, they have an impact on the community," Holbrook said.

ARD's current park inventory includes 217.2 acres of active parkland and several special-use facilities. In order to maintain its current land and facilities, ARD must keep pace with rising costs by charging impact fees and the Nexus Study will help determine fees and expenses.

"You need to check in every few years what your development costs are compared to your input fees," Kirsh told three ARD board members present Thursday.

Board members Holbrook, Gordon Ainsleigh and Curt Smith listened to Kirsh's presentation, but board members Jimmy Carroll and Jim Gray were absent.

In regards to the Capital Improvements Project, which was also on the agenda, it was agreed that further discussion be postponed due to Carroll and Gray being absent. There might even be an ARD workshop to iron out some of the differences of opinion on proposed projects, according to Kahl Muscott, district administrator.

There was a vote on the Capital Improvements Project as written with Holbrook and Ainsleigh voting "yes," and Smith, "no."

"I'm not happy with some of the projects proposed and I came here with the idea to oppose it," Smith said at the meeting.

When it comes to raising fees in order to maintain services, ARD Director Holbrook told Kirsh that he hopes the public will understand the need to raise fees.

"We don't want to be seen as the bad guys who are raising the fees," Holbrook said. "We're just trying to get what's fair to us."

In regards to fees, Kirsh pointed out what's necessary. The study shows that one pool could be supported by a population base of 21,500.

"The fees are meant to enhance the current recreation facility," Kirsh said. "In general the intent is to maintain the service level you currently have."

Joe Fecko, ARD administrative services manager, keeps track of ARD expenditures and sees the Nexus Study as a valuable tool.

"The Nexus Study will quantify the needs of the district in terms of new construction and needs of the community," Fecko said. "Without the Nexus we have no way to determine what the fair assessment fees would be. We have that third-party service to give us those numbers."

The projected population growth for the area that ARD covers would be an additional 3,950 in 10 years, according to the Sacramento Area Council of Governments research. Roseville was cited by Holbrook as an example of a "well planned community." However, it was the City of Roseville "doing all the building there," Holbrook said.

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There was a previous Nexus Study, but ARD did not take full advantage of it.

"I was here eight years ago when we did the first Nexus Study and we didn't go to the city," Holbrook said.

In the future, Ainsleigh would like to see more walking trails and cited medical studies that present conclusive evidence for increased life spans for those who walk daily.

"I would like to see a trail at each neighborhood park, so people would not have to drive far," Ainsleigh said.

ARD candidate Wayne Lyndon, who has been attending ARD meetings for several months, gave some public comments on the Capital Improvement Projects and mentioned it would be challenging for new board members to carry out projects approved by the current board without knowing their intentions.

Jim Ferris, another ARD candidate, was in attendance and gave public comments regarding the acquisition of 28 acres of land near Regional Park donated by the Shockley Trust. Board member Smith spoke against accepting the land because of possible future costs. Ferris said the land would be a valuable asset even if it were kept only as a park preserve and not developed.

A decision to accept or reject the Shockley Trust land was postponed to the next meeting.

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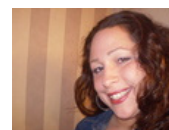


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