

Capitola fee protested

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CAPITOLA — The subject of parking just never seems to go away in this city.

This time, the controversy stems from a \$10 fee instigated by the City Council for residents in the city's neighborhood parking permit program.

The program, designed to give neighborhoods back to residents by prohibiting public on-street parking, has been operating for several years without fees.

Residents of two streets and one neighborhood in the beachfront community have presented petitions with 168 signatures, protesting the fee. The item will be discussed at tonight's City Council meeting.

The crux of the protest is the fact residents petitioned for permit-parking when there was no fee. Now that they have the program, the council

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**— Tony Laus,
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instituted the \$10-per-vehicle charge.

City Manager Steve Burrell said the fee "simply covers the city's costs of running the program." This includes paying for the permit stickers, staff time in distributing them and enforcement of the parking prohibitions.

Residents presenting petitions represent Burlingame Avenue and Oak Drive, as well as most of the

Depot Hill neighborhood.

Residents of several other streets and neighborhoods in the city, however, have not asked for the fees to be eliminated.

Tony Laus, a self-proclaimed "freedom fighter" and Oak Drive resident, maintains, "We pay rent and we pay property tax. We pay license fees, we pay for car upkeep. We want to park our cars in front of our taxed homes and rented homes for free!"

Robert and Irene Cortez of Burlingame Avenue also say the fee is "unfair," asking, "What is Capitola coming to?"

Coincidentally, the parking flap comes just a month before the city will open a new 232-space downtown parking lot. The lot is expected to alleviate much of the perennial parking crunch.

The council will meet at 7 tonight in the council chamber at City Hall.