



Computerized ticket dispenser to be used in Capitola's pay-parking area.

Capitola OKs pay parking

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CAPITOLA — Whether one calls them parking meters or computerized parking banks, visitors to Capitola Village will be paying for on-street parking by mid-summer.

The City Council Thursday night unanimously voted to move forward on its multi-million-dollar downtown parking plan, which includes the controversial purchase of Pacific Cove Mobile Home Park for partial conversion into a parking lot.

The major funding source for the five-part plan is the anticipated \$200,000-a-year revenue from the pay parking.

City Manager Steve Burrell told councilmen the innovative "pay and display" parking meter system could be in operation in the village by mid-July. The fee will be 50-cents an hour, with the present two-hour limit remaining in force.

The pay-parking area will include all of the Capitola Esplanade and portions of Capitola, Monterey and Stockton avenues.

The system makes use of nine computerized ticket dispensers rather than meters at every stall. Councilmen have adamantly opposed the aesthetics factor of conventional parking meters.

The BART-like ticket dispensers will each handle about 40 parking spaces. Motorists would need to walk to the machines, purchase a ticket and place it on the dashboard of their car.

The system's one drawback is the walking distance involved in purchasing a ticket. According to Burrell, the majority of parking spaces will be no more than five spaces from a dispenser; the worst case would require a user to walk 15 spaces away.

Some 260 spaces were proposed to be included in the pay-parking area, with enforcement from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. At the suggestion of businesswoman Carin Mudgett, the council agreed to include some 10 free 20-minute spaces for quick shopping trips.

The pay-parking system is only one of five parts of the overall plan. Burrell was quick to point out that all five parts are needed for the plan to be feasible.

Other portions of the plan include:

- A village area assessment district of \$50,000, in which both residential and commercial property owners will participate.

- A neighborhood parking-permit program to be instituted to prevent visitors from flooding village residential areas in an attempt to avoid paying for parking.

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- Adoption of a village area beautification plan, which will deal with general upgrading of the public areas of downtown.

- Purchase of Pacific Cove, which will involve changing the land-use designation of a portion of the park and eventual conversion of that portion to a parking lot.

While the pay-parking system will be the first portion of the multi-faceted plan to be instigated, it drew virtually no comment from the 12 persons speaking during the public hearing.

Most speakers were Pacific Cove residents concerned about the possibility of being forced out of their homes when the parking-lot conversion occurs.

As proposed, the upper terrace of the 83-space park would eventually be converted into a 203-space parking lot.

Councilmen, however, unanimously agreed that the parking lot may be years in coming. They agreed conversion of the upper terrace to parking would be done only through "natural attrition" — as residents voluntarily moved or agreed to relocate to the lower terrace of the park.

Councilman Jerry Clarke described the council as "five persons on roller skates carrying a basket of eggs." He said they will move slowly and carefully so as not to drop any of the eggs.

Councilmen agreed to form a committee to meet with park residents and keep them informed of city plans. The city's parking committee will also be re-established to work out what proved to be the most controversial segment of the plan — deciding

assessments to be charged to property owners within the village area assessment district.

Several persons spoke about inequities of the assessments — proposed to be 10 cents a square foot for commercial properties and 5 cents a square foot for residential properties.

They maintained higher assessments should be charged to commercial property owners, and that the assessment district should be enlarged to include the Depot Hill area.

The parking committee and the city will work together to possibly adjust the proposed charges and boundaries.

Annual revenues for the parking plan are estimated at \$405,000, while initial capital outlay is \$671,000. The expenses includes the down payment on Pacific Cove.

A \$250,000 loan from the city's general fund was approved in order to get the plan off the ground