

Council weighs controversial parking-fee plan for Village

By JENNIFER KOSS
STAFF WRITER

A controversial plan to charge Capitola Village residents and merchants a parking fee, as well as zoning changes to preserve the Village's charm, will be discussed in public hearings at Thursday's Capitola City Council meeting, 7 p.m. at City Hall.

Village residents would pay \$50 annually under the proposal, while merchants would be charged according to their gross income.

For gross receipts of up to \$50,000, the fee would be \$125, for example, and for up to \$100,000, \$250. The sliding scale would continue on up to receipts of \$1 million to \$20 million, which would mean a fee of \$4,800.

Money collected would help

finance conversion of the Pacific Cove mobile home park into a parking lot. Construction of the lot — on land purchased by the city to relieve the parking shortage in the Village — is expected to cost \$250,000 to \$350,000.

Merchants and residents ripped the proposal at a November hearing, calling it unfair and discriminatory. Some people suggested that all Capitola residents should contribute to the fund.

Village residents in particular lambasted the proposal, calling it an insult to be charged \$50 for the aggravation of fighting tourists for parking spaces.

In another Village issue, tighter restrictions on new construction and reconstruction

would be imposed if the council approves a revision of the city's zoning and design plan. The design plan has been in the works for several years as part of the implementation of the Local Coastal Plan, which affects two-thirds of Capitola.

Included in the zoning changes is the addition of a "residential overlay" district, in which only residential uses would be permitted.

Another change related to use would allow residential and office uses on both first and second floors of Village buildings, but would limit other commercial uses to the first floor only, unless a conditional use permit is acquired. The change was made to discourage conversion of second-floor residences.

"The Village functions as a resort area and a residential

community," the plan states. "Upper floors are often residential, with commercial activities on the ground level. This mixture of commercial and residential uses in the compact Village is an important element of the character of the Village."

Tighter restrictions would also be placed on "cultural areas," including the row of houses known as the Six Sisters, the stretch of buildings along the Esplanade, Venetian Court, the Capitola Theater, and residences along Lawn Way and the Soquel Creek side of Riverview Avenue.

Also the topic of a public hearing is a rent-hike request by the owners of the Brookvale Terrace mobile home park. Staff is recommending a 3.5 to 5 percent increase retroactive to Aug. 1, 1986.