

Contra Costa supervisors approve transfer of five county parks in Bay

Point

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Contra Costa supervisors voted unanimously Tuesday to turn over five county parks located in unincorporated Bay Point to the Ambrose Recreation and Park District as part of a lawsuit settlement to help the park district repair a swimming pool.

The transferred parks -- Lynbrook, Hickory Meadows, Viewpointe, Boeger and Tradewinds -- make up less than six acres of land.

The settlement makes it possible for Ambrose, which serves Bay Point residents, to receive \$479,000 in developer fees to renovate a pool at Ambrose Park in Pittsburg. Any future developer fees would also go to the district. The park is just across from the Bay Point border. The pool has been closed since 2009 for repairs.

Supervisors approved the settlement despite concerns raised by Bay Point resident Debra Mason that Ambrose doesn't have enough money to properly maintain the five parks. "Ambrose has been operating at deficit for the last two years," she said.

Ambrose filed the lawsuit in September 2009 after the county denied a request to turn over developer fees for the pool work. The settlement was previously approved by Ambrose board members.

Before the lawsuit was filed, Pittsburg annexed land in Bay Point that included Ambrose Park.

"Park fees should be spent in unincorporated Bay Point, not Pittsburg," Mason said.

The settlement calls for the county to provide Ambrose with \$51,000 a year to take care of the flowers and plants in the five parks. The county will continue to maintain the parks' right-of-way areas.

Mason said the \$51,000 won't cover all the maintenance, given that each park will have to spend \$3,000 a year in service charges to the Golden State Water Co. "That's \$15,000 just to get the water there and it's not even turned on," she said.

Tarry Smith, general manager of Ambrose, said funding is a concern.

"The funds they gave us to take care of the parks probably won't be sufficient."

But if Ambrose didn't accept the terms of the settlement, "we wouldn't have a pool project," he said.

County officials and Smith said the transfer makes sense, given that the parks are in Bay Point.

"It will be in the hands of Ambrose Park District to make sure those parks are maintained," said Supervisor Federal Glover, whose jurisdiction includes Bay Point.

Supervisor John Gioia said that having the parks transferred to Ambrose could give Bay Point voters more incentive to approve any future funding measure for the parks that might be placed on the ballot.

"It would provide greater local control over those parks," he said.

In other action, supervisors approved the closing of the county-operated Bella Monte Child Care Center in Bay Point due to state budget cuts. Children who go to Bella Monte will be transferred to two other child care centers in Bay Point. However, the closure and consolidation will result in the loss of 11 jobs.

Bella Monte, which serves 40 children between the ages of 3 and 5, will close Friday. Some 23 kids will be moving

on to kindergarten, while the remaining 17 will go to the Riverview and Lavonia Allen child care centers.

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