



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 8/28/2018

File #: 18-1086

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Planning and Building Department

SUBJECT:

Introduction of the County's Zoning Ordinance Amending Section 312-1.3.3 of Humboldt County Code Relating to Increasing Per-Diem Allowances for Planning Commissioners

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors introduce the proposed ordinance by title and waive the first reading to Section 312-1.3.3 of Humboldt County Code - Planning Commission Formation and Composition - to increase per-diem rates for Planning Commissioners from \$30 to \$140 [Attachment 1]; open the public hearing, receive and consider the staff report and proposed determination of exempt status under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), accept public comment, and close the public hearing; deliberate on the proposed Ordinance; set the ordinance for adoption at least one (1) week away from the date of this hearing; and direct the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors to publish the pre-adoption summary of the attached ordinance and to post a certified copy of the full text of the ordinance in the office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors at least five (5) days prior to the Board of Supervisors meeting at which the ordinance will be adopted [Government Code Section 25124(b)(1)].

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

General Fund

DISCUSSION:

This item involves adoption of an amendment to the County's Zoning Ordinance (Section 312-1.3.3 of Humboldt County Code) to achieve parity with the per-diem rate for Planning Commissioners when the rate was initiated in 1976. The code section currently establishes a \$30 per-diem rate for Planning Commissioners, the same amount as when it was first done in 1976. However, due to the cost of inflation in California the \$30 per-diem has a present value of approximately \$7 compared to 1976, so there is justification for an increase to maintain parity with the rates Planning Commissioners received in 1976.

In addition, with the passage of the Cannabis Ordinance in 2016, Planning Commissioners are being asked to review far more projects than normal. For instance in the first half of 2018, the Planning Commission took action on 47 projects, which is more than the average for the entire year each year between 2010 and 2016 (45 projects).

The proposed amendments would increase the per-diem rates for the Planning Commissioners from the current \$30 amount to \$140 (467 percent), which comes close to achieving parity with the 1976 per-diem rate because the cost of inflation in California rose by 487 percent between 1976 and 2018.

The proposed ordinance amendment is in the public interest because it fairly compensates the Commissioners for the hard work they do, including reading staff reports, visiting project sites, attending public hearings, and training. A summary of the ordinance was published in the Times Standard newspaper on August 15, 2018.

CEQA Compliance

The proposed amendment is an organizational or administrative activity of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment and is therefore not a "project" as defined by CEQA (Guidelines section 15378 (b)(2), (5).)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The Planning Commission per-diem expenses are funded either by applicant cost-recovery or the general fund contribution to the department. Assuming that there continue to be two meetings per month, it could cost \$2,640, up from \$720, per year. It should be

noted some commissioners choose to waive their per-diem, as well as their mileage reimbursement, in the interest of public service. Adoption of this ordinance is estimated to cost the general fund less than \$1,000 per year but could be as high as \$2,640.

The proposed ordinance amendment is consistent with the Board's 2018 Strategic Framework because it safeguards the public trust by managing the county's resources to ensure sustainability of services.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

No other agencies have been involved in developing this ordinance amendment.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board could choose to include in the ordinance a form of compensation tied to the rate of inflation that would rise and fall automatically with the rate of inflation. Staff does not necessarily oppose this alternative, but notes it would be different than the compensation rates for any county employees set by the Board.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Ordinance No. _____ Amending Section 312-1 of Humboldt County Code - the Zoning Ordinance - to Increase Per-Diem Allowances for Planning Commissioners.

Attachment 2: Pre-Adoption Summary of the Ordinance.