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Fire District Still Seeking Records

■ In Plaze Tax Abatement Project

By Pauline Masson
Pacific Editor

The Pacific Fire District said the city dragged its feet on providing copies of documents it requested showing how the decision was made to deny the district request for one-time reimbursement for the Plaze Inc. project.

At the May 5 board meeting, aldermen approved a development agreement with Plaze Inc. and MI Development to abate 50 percent of real estate taxes for a period of 20 years.

Ed Bruns, Fire Protection District chairman, spoke at that meeting, saying the fire district opposes the project.

Bruns said the fire district wants Plaze to make three payments to the district, over a 12-year period, totaling \$200,952 to pay for firefighting equipment.

The request asked for \$48,888 the first year for gas detectors and a

thermal imaging camera, \$69,120 in year three for firefighter turnout gear and \$82,944 in year 12 for new turnout gear.

Bruns said the district learned through City Administrator Harold Selby that the request had been denied. Fire District officials said they wanted copies of all correspondence between the city and Plaze regarding the request.

The fire district chairman returned to the June 15 board of aldermen meeting saying the fire district had not received the requested documents.

Bruns said he did receive a letter from City Clerk Kim Barfield stating that the district would have to pay \$150 for research and printing the copies.

"Our attorney believes since we are both government entities you should waive this fee to let us come here to see the documents," Bruns said. "It seems we've been stonewalled."

He also said Barfield also told him it would take 14 business days to produce the records.

Bruns said he was delivering the check for \$150 and within 14 days he hoped to see the requested records.

"If we don't get to see the records, we're prepared to take the next step," he said. "We have asked politely. I'm asking politely tonight and the money has been given to the city."

"We don't think this is an unfair request," Bruns added. "Under the Sunshine Law we have a right to see the records."

Mayor Herb Adams directed Barfield to go beyond the request to look at the records and make copies for the fire district.

"Madam Clerk, will you make sure our actions are in accordance with ordinance and state statute," Adams said. "I would say we should go beyond the request and make certain that they have hard copy. Please advise city administrator when those records are ready."