



February 14, 2020  
5:00 p.m.

MEMBER COMMENTS:  
PROPOSED CHANGES TO ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS FEE SCHEDULE  
January 1 thru February 14, 2020

*The member comment period for the proposed changes to the Architectural Standards Fee Schedule started January 1 with the notice posted in the January Tahoe Donner News. The notice was also posted on the 45-Day Notice webpage on the Tahoe Donner website. Comments must be submitted noon on February 21, 2020. There were two (2) comments submitted between January 1 thru February 14, 2020.*

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Almost exactly one year ago Architectural Standards Task Force (ASTF) reviewed the AS fee schedule changes proposed for 2019. The letter with ASTF feedback started with the following two paragraph quote, which is very applicable today as well.

**“Mission: Architectural Standards ensure that structures and properties in Tahoe Donner are in harmony with their natural surroundings and benefit the quality of life and property values of association property owners.**

As the BOD considers these pricing changes and any other changes - please keep in mind that we believe that the goal for the ASC is to help homeowners to improve and maintain existing properties. Please ask yourself whether the fee increases are consistent with the stated mission.”

In my professional work I learned, that most of the good design documents include two sections: “Goals” and “Non-Goals”. We need to make sure, that above mentioned goals are considered along with the “Non-Goals” for ASO.

For example, enforcing the aesthetic standards and harmony with natural surroundings is a goal. But enforcing the up-to-date accuracy of plans in ASO archives by demanding, that the owner changes the plans, is a non-goal.

Keeping in mind the goals and non-goals we can review the proposed fee schedule changes.

1. Decrease of administrative fee for major and minor projects with notification. This makes sense from the PR perspective to please developers community. However, the reason for the decrease given in the document sounds strange, because the recent fee increase was not based on the processing cost in the first place. In





- general, this is a good change if ASO can afford it, but a better reason language would help.
2. Increase of inspection fees by \$10. This is purely cost based increase and makes sense if the numbers are right.
  3. Create a fee for revisions. The new fee is proposed to “avoid the current practice where an unlimited number routing through the same above timely process is conducted where revision fee does not exist”. The cases, where a long review is needed, are when a revision substantially changes the project. For example the change to add a new structure (a room or a house), a significant (over 150sf) footprint increase, a change requiring immediate neighbor notification, or a change, that can NOT be allowed even with a variance. If these cases are meant in “Full Committee Resubmittal fee” and “Revision Fees”, it should be made more clear. In cases of other deviations from the project, which almost any house improvement project has, the deviations found during the inspections should be photographed and added to project file. No need to change original project documentation. This would be a better solution to change this "same timely process" for the majority of revisions.
  4. Create a non-permitted improvement fee. This fee is an example of chasing a non-goal and should not be added. If a non-permitted improvement found by ASO violates important AS guidelines and can not be grandfathered, there should be a fine, not a fee. Such improvement has to be reverted or corrected. Example may be a new unusual bright color causing a need to repaint, a new bright street light violating light pollution standards, a large change to a structure footprint causing coverage % violation. All the other non-permitted improvements should be photographed and added to property file without forcing an owner to obtain a back-dated permit.

We want to remind everyone the mission of AS in TD quoted above. We believe, that ASC and BOD needs to make amendments to the proposed fee schedule.

We also remind, that a year ago we were expecting operational plan timeline for implementing ASTF recommendations. Still waiting.

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#### Background comments.

Architectural Standards Task Force discussed similar fee schedule a year ago and all agreed, that the actual numbers are less important than the ASO practices. We had seen from our several surveys, that both members and build/design professionals were not overly concerned about the fees being too high. Their (and our) concerns were about when and how the fees are applied and what process they have to go through.





The Task Force has a scheduled meeting on Feb 10, 2020, where we will issue the joint comments and recommendations regarding 2020 fee schedule. In the meantime I am presenting a draft, which we will be discussing, and which gives ASC an opportunity to amend their proposal.

I believe, that ASC have enough reasons to revise some administrative and inspection fees, as outlined the 45-day notice.

I do have concerns about the proposed Revision Fees. They seem reasonable only in cases, where revisions to the project are significant and processing requires significant amount of time. I have serious doubts, that this is true regarding Minor Projects without neighbor notifications. And this is probably not true for a wide variety of revisions, not just the color changes. It will be important that the proper language should be added to the rule of applying such fees. Otherwise ASO may start automatically applying revision fees, which would only discourage project owners to seek revision approvals.

I oppose introduction of the new type of fees: "Non-Permitted Improvement Fee" in the next section of the document. If an inspector files an instance of non-compliance to Architectural guidelines either during HOIP or during project inspection, ASO issues Notice to Comply. The change required to comply with the guidelines may include improvements, which should be submitted to ASO as a project with existing corresponding fees. However, if ASO finds some rule-compliant features, which are missing in ASO files or in current project documentation, it is not in HOA interests to make a "project" of it with extra paperwork, expenses, and fees. Such findings should be just added to the property file.

The changes should be made in 2020 Architectural Standards Fee Schedule and the explanations attached to the "schedule":

1. Revision fees for Major Projects and Minor Projects with neighbor notification. 2nd revision. Please add language "2nd revision with multiple items". Add comments explaining "multiple items" as "requiring more than 1hour of processing by ASO and ASC". (or another metric instead of 1hour)
2. Remove revision fees for Minor Projects without neighbor notification.
3. Remove change of administrative fees based on "non-permitted improvement fee".
4. Add explanation in the comments what is defined by "Full Committee Resubmittal New Admin Fee"

