

Mayor seeks delay on Nature Center admission fee

By LORI PILGER / Lincoln Journal Star | Posted: Thursday, August 6, 2009 3:55 pm

Pioneers Park users balked, and Mayor Chris Beutler listened.

On Thursday, he said he'll ask the City Council to delay a proposed admission fee at the park's Nature Center for a year. The extra time is intended to give Friends of the Nature Center a chance to propose an alternative plan to sustain the center without fees.

"I'm hopeful that that compromise will be seen as a sensible thing to them," he said.

The fee was to account for \$36,000 of \$280,000 in total fee increases by the Parks and Recreation Department, which were proposed to help balance the budget. But it accounted for the most vocal criticism of his proposed budget.

The city hadn't received significant negative feedback on any of the other proposed Parks and Recreation fees, he said.

"I think citizens should know one way or another the quality of the Nature Center will be maintained," he said.

Beutler said he'll work with the City Council to seek alternate funding for the Nature Center for the one year period.

The council will hold a public hearing on the budget from 2:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday. It will vote on changes to the mayor's proposed budget Wednesday and is scheduled to adopt the budget Aug. 24.