

Bellevue council to vote on doubling pay

■ Supporters say the \$7,000 increase would encourage more people to run for office.

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The Bellevue City Council will vote Monday on a proposal to double the pay for council members.

If approved, it will be the first pay hike in about 20 years.

The proposal offered by council President Carol Blood calls for increasing council pay from \$7,000 a year to \$14,000 annually. The ordinance also would boost the mayor's salary by \$2,000, to \$17,000 a year.

The increases would be effective on the first council meeting in December, when the new council members and mayor are sworn in.

A nearly hourlong public hearing on the proposal was held Feb. 22.

"It's your duty to look out for councilmen of the future," former Councilman Jack Charvat told current council members at the hearing. He unsuccessfully offered a similar ordinance two years ago.

Charvat and some current

council members argue that the raise was not for their own enrichment but to offer adequate compensation to encourage young professionals and working-class citizens to run for office.

Another former councilman, Gus Erickson, agreed a raise was warranted but said he was troubled at trying to make up all 20 years in one fell swoop. "An adjustment is necessary," he said, "but doubling it is not an adjustment."

Former Councilman Chuck Fredrick, a candidate for Bellevue mayor, said raising council salaries should be placed on a ballot and voted on by the public.

Also during Monday's meeting, the council will hold a public hearing on a proposal to convert a portion of the long-dormant Goldman's on Fort Crook Road to a self-storage facility.

An ordinance proposes changing the zoning so the rear 150 feet of the building could be developed as an indoor mini-storage facility and the remainder of the building could be remodeled into retail bays.

The Bellevue Planning Department supports the rezoning request and reconfiguration, noting the building has been vacant for a long time and the zoning change would not affect the portion that fronts Fort Crook Road.