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Voters will get to decide fate of Shadowrock

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The issue of whether or not a development agreement for a luxury hotel and golf course in the Chino Cone should be extended will be submitted to voters in November 2007.

Shadowrock would be under the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway.

Earlier this year, the Palm Springs City Council decided to extend a development agreement 10 years for Shadowrock, which has been in the works for 22 years.

The election is the result of residents' efforts to gather enough signatures to qualify a referendum that they hope will overturn the council's decision.

Save Our Mountains Chairman Jono Hildner submitted nearly 3,000 signatures last month.

Hildner says the city should never have extended the agreement because it expired in 2003.

"Times and values have changed in 13 years (since the development agreement was first made in 1993)," he said during the meeting.

The developer, Mark Bragg, contends that a series of lawsuits and bankruptcies have prevented him from starting the project.

Two weeks ago, another lawsuit socked Shadowrock. The Sierra Club and Center for Biological Diversity are challenging the city's decision to allow the development agreement extension.

The lawsuit, however, could overthrow any need for a public vote.

For example, if the court concurs with the Sierra Club and Center for Biological Diversity, it would force the city to rescind its action to

approve the development agreement and complete any additional environmental work the court might require.

Under these circumstances, the election would not be required, City Attorney Doug Holland said. He expects a court decision in the spring.

The City Council voted 5-0 Wednesday to put the matter to voters at the next regular municipal election Nov. 6, 2007, costing the city \$7,500 instead of \$20,000 to \$55,000 at other elections in November, March or June.

This will allow the lawsuit to play out and possibly produce results that would negate the need for an election, Holland said.

Mayor Pro Tem Ginny Foat said she would rather see the city rescind its decision, but voted for the referendum.

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