

EFFLUENT REQUEST SET FOR CITY VOTE; PROPOSAL WOULD GIVE CLUB AT LAS CAMPANAS ANOTHER 150 ACRE-FEET PER YEAR.

By: JULIE ANN GRIMM

The city of Santa Fe would sell more of its treated effluent to the Club at Las Campanas under a proposal approved Wednesday by the Public Utilities Committee.

The measure now heads to the City Council for a vote.

The club's two members-only golf courses adjacent to the luxury subdivision already use some nonpotable water to irrigate greens, but drinking water is still used for other operations.

Las Campanas has taken steps to reduce overall water use, including the removal of turf and the installation of about 1,200 sprinkler heads that are more water-efficient. Course managers say those changes already have resulted in using 10 percent to 15 percent less water. When improvements are completed next summer, that number could climb higher, said Phil George, board president.

Once they learned why large areas of grass were getting ripped off the course this year, most club members applauded the efforts, he said. In most cases, turf was removed from fairways, golf cart paths and in other spots that were already out of the regular playing area.

Golfer Jim Williamson, who has been a club member since 1999, said he liked the new look.

"I think it makes it a better course because when you are standing on a tee box, you get a narrower target," he said.

Native plants and grasses will replace manicured grass on about 18 acres, and groundskeepers have already started adding shrubs and deciduous trees purchased this summer at Plants of the Southwest, said Tom Egelhoff, course superintendent. The plants will need extra water until they get established, but eventually, "They will use a heck of a lot less water than the grass that we took out," said Egelhoff.

The development can buy as much as

450 acre-feet of effluent each year. The new purchase agreement would allow another 150 acre-feet each year at an annual cost of about \$117,000.

City Utilities Director Brian Synder said the proposal is crafted so the city can revisit its allocation of effluent after a study is completed early next year. In 2008, the city's

annual report indicates the city sent about 4,318 acre-feet of treated water to the Santa Fe River and sold 1,444 acre-feet to private users.

Patti Bushee noted that in prior discussions course managers resisted the idea of using treated effluent.

George said he can't speak to past disputes, but the current managers prefer effluent because it has a lower salt content.

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