

## Canon City restaurant detoured by high costs

Jack in the Box drops project over road fixes and other costs.



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By TRACY HARMON | [tharmon@chieftain.com](mailto:tharmon@chieftain.com) |

**CANON CITY** —A Jack in the Box fast food outlet will not be built in Canon City after a developer withdrew his application based on high costs.

Emerald Cascade Restaurant Systems Chief Executive Officer Michael Bladow withdrew his application to build the Jack in the Box restaurant at the corner of Greydene and Fremont Drive just north of U.S. 50 at the Sky Valley Motel site located between Faricy Ford and a liquor store.

"They submitted a site plan that was perfect," said Steve Rabe, Canon City city administrator.

"They also submitted a traffic plan to CDOT for the state's right of way. It was CDOT's requirement that they build a left turn lane along the entire block and their findings were based on a Jack in the Box traffic engineer's calculation of impact," Rabe said.

The price tag for the turn lane was estimated at \$150,000. That came on top of \$170,000 in asbestos removal costs that were four times higher than the developer anticipated, Rabe said.

"Neither of those things had anything to do with the city. We did require a \$7,800 impact fee for the impact to the city streets, but I don't believe that would make or break that project," Rabe said.

"I think, quite clearly, if we set a precedent and do not require the impact fee now for one business, how can we do it for anyone else?"

"It has always been our philosophy that developers should pay their own way for their developments. We are funded by taxpayer dollars and we have a commitment to the taxpayers," Rabe said.

Rabe said city staff tried to work on Bladow's behalf to reduce the cost but there was "no way to mitigate" the CDOT requirement.

"If we paid that \$150,000 that is half the street budget and it is not a city street. We don't want to have terrible roads and be in the hole all of the time," Rabe explained.

"I think they could have partnered with the liquor store on the curb and gutter requirement and it would have been an opportunity for both to work together to lower the cost. I also think they can negotiate to make that turn lane not quite as wide and that would significantly reduce the cost," Rabe said.

Since Bladow announced he would withdraw the application, the city has been blamed, Rabe said.

"We spent a lot of staff time trying to assist them (Jack in the Box) and at the same time we understand CDOT's point of view. I don't appreciate being drawn into the fire. None of this is the city's fault," Rabe said.

Rabe said Bladow is working to build a second Jack in the Box in Pueblo and more sites in Colorado Springs. He understands Bladow's decision, as a business person, to move forward with other projects, he said.

Rabe said builders and others have accused the city of not being cooperative with new businesses.

"We have had six new businesses start up in early 2010 that went through the regulations OK and there are four more we are working with now that should all be done by the first quarter of 2011. That is an awful lot of commercial activity in a small town in an economic recession," Rabe said.

A call to Bladow's Carlsbad, Calif., office was not returned Tuesday.

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