

Helmet or fine! Skate Park ordinance passes

Written by Lauren Ohnesorge
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The Skate Park was on the Watauga Commissioners' agenda yesterday- with the adoption of an ordinance that will require skateboarders to wear a helmet or face a civil fine.

A warning is not mentioned in the ordinance- but Chair Jim Deal spoke with the Sheriff's Office and does not believe it will be an issue.

They are not looking to slap fines on kids, he said. Deal expects warnings to be issued, despite the fact that it's not specified in the ordinance.

The new ordinance is similar to the one discussed in the public hearing last month, according to Deron Geouque.

Fines would increase depending on the number of offenses. One offense could yield a \$50 fine. The next time would result in a \$75 fine, followed by a \$100 fine for each additional offense. Repeat offenders could face a one-year suspension from the skate park.

The measure was passed unanimously- but left Appalachian Skate Park President Buzz Berry concerned.

He does not agree with increasing fines and fears that kids kicked out of the park will venture back to the streets. The park was created to provide kids a safe place to skate. Without it, their alternate skating locale might be hazardous.

Not only must helmets be worn, according to the ordinance, they must be worn properly, using the strap.