

Artist's troubles grow as he tries to rebuild

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe would like Peter Darvas to start with a new canvas. Darvas would rather work with the outline he has.

In September 2012, Darvas' sprawling house on Pioneer Trail and April Drive was destroyed by fire. Flames also engulfed the house next door on April.

Today the neighbors have a foundation poured. This new construction is in stark contrast to the destruction left by the fire that is so evident at the Darvas site.

Darvas told *Lake Tahoe News* that on Tuesday he was going to submit plans to the city for how he wants to resurrect his home and studio.



A 6-foot cyclone fence surrounds the remains of Peter Darvas' house that was destroyed by fire in September 2012. Photo/LTN

"I believe a large percentage of the structure can be salvaged," Darvas said.

He has been slowly taking down some of the structure. Another dumpster was dropped off Tuesday afternoon.

The city has sent him letters wanting more to come down faster.

The South Lake Tahoe artist was before the City Council on July 16 asking for leniency in regards to his delinquent South Tahoe Refuse bill. He owes \$2,700.

Mayor Tom Davis begged his colleagues to give the man 45 more days. When they voted against him, Davis called it "sad." Councilman Hal Cole abstained because he lives across the street from Darvas. Councilwomen Angela Swanson, JoAnn Conner and Brooke Laine voted to proceed with the filing with the county tax office that the Planning Commission had already approved on a 4-0 vote.

The money isn't just from the past 10 months. As STR President Jeff Tillman told the council July 16, this total is the accumulation of years of unpaid garbage bills. That is why the majority on the council could not grant an exception or extension to Darvas.

Darvas told *Lake Tahoe News*, "I'm not the most timely or responsible person when it comes to crossing T's and dotting I's. I operate in a different reality."

Darvas told the council he has retained an attorney to go after his insurance company to get cash. Until that happens, he said he has no money to pay his debts. He thought 30 days would be enough time to get the insurance issue worked out.

He has not created enough new art at the studio near Nepheles to pay his bills.

Darvas and the city have had run-ins for years regarding the clutter at his place. In January 2012, he was sparring with the council regarding an abatement fine.

With the vote by the council, the county can place a lien against his property so STR gets what it is owed.