

S. Tahoe nips annual pot shop event in the bud

By Kathryn Reed

One day Julian Marley might write a song about South Lake Tahoe, or maybe Reno, since that is where he will end up playing on Sunday.

Marley, son of the legendary Bob Marley, along with the Uprising Band were slated to be the headliner of the 4th annual TWC Cannabis Cup on April 20. The South Lake Tahoe City Council on Tuesday quashed that idea.

Cody Bass, who runs Tahoe Wellness Cooperative, appealed the city's denial for a special activity permit. Bass has had such a permit for the last three years to put on a one-day event in the parking lot in the portion of Bijou Center that his landlord owns.

As with most events, his has grown over the years. This year it was to include Marley playing in the parking lot to anyone over 18 who paid for a ticket, and the cannabis cup that would have been inside the collective and for members only.

The City Council on a 5-0 vote after about two hours of discussing the matter said no way. That was staff's recommendation.

"It's a bummer for us," Bass told *Lake Tahoe News* after the decision. "It's mind blowing to me that in the end they didn't make it happen."

For permits like this on private property the applicant needs to apply no less than two weeks in advance. Bass did that. He also said the city never presented him with any complaints from the prior year.

What the city took issue with is that the original permit filed on April 4 did not resemble the promotional material that was being circulated for the event. This raised concerns about parking, noise and disturbance to neighboring businesses, as well as possible traffic issues along Highway 50.

"He was informed it violated the dispensary permit," Hilary Roverud, with the city's planning department, told the council.

Bass said the cannabis cup is allowed under state and local law because only people with medical marijuana cards are allowed to participate. He also pointed out how a number of cities in the state allow these and in some ways are partners by having them on city owned property.

Bass submitted another proposal that eliminated the cannabis cup and only had the music portion. Staff denied this as well, primarily citing that without consent from the adjacent property owner to allow parking that there was no plan in place to accommodate people. Security and transportation were other concerns of the city's.

Bass said he could make it all work.

Collectively the council believed Bass should have been working with the city sooner. He repeatedly said he worked within the city's guidelines.

The city offered to help him to move the event to Bijou Community Park, but Bass did not want to go there. He said it wouldn't work for the stage and didn't want to be the test case for such an event of this magnitude there.

It's estimated about 1,300 would have attended the concert.

Bass asked the city to allow him to use Lakeview Commons, saying the concert would be open to everyone for free. The

city said no; it did not want to have to revise its rules about the use of that venue at this late date.

Bass told *Lake Tahoe News* the concert will go on. Now it will be at the Knitting Factory in Reno on Sunday.

As for what will happen in the future, Bass predicts with Nevada getting into the medical marijuana business and Reno allowing 11 shops, that a cannabis cup will be in the Biggest Little City's future and South Lake Tahoe will let this opportunity go up in smoke.