

McLaughlin: Understands the meaning of team

Publisher's note: Lake Tahoe News asked candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Douglas County School District, South Tahoe Public Utility District and Lake Valley Fire Protection District a series of questions. We are running the responses in the order received. All profiles may be found under the Special Projects listing and then the 2106 November Candidate Profiles category.



Dan McLaughlin is running for one of two seats open on the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Name: Dan McLaughlin

Age: 65

Job/profession: Salesman, volleyball coach

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: I was chairman of the South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Committee when Measure S was passed and as such attended many board meetings as both a speaker and a listener. I am a past president of the Optimist Club and was

on the board for Silver State Youth Sports.

Why are you running for City Council?: I have always had a passion to serve my community and now that I no longer coach high school sports, I feel the time is right to pursue this passion.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: I have already proven I can work as a part of a team to get things done with my efforts to pass Measure S. I have been very involved in this community for over 40 years and seen the city grow and evolve. I have stayed abreast of the issues we face on a daily basis and I am a good listener. I have done a lot during my life in South Lake Tahoe: worked various jobs, owned businesses, worked in the media, owned a home, raised a family, volunteered my time and have spent 25 years working with youth as a high school coach.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: I have always been someone who gets things done. I find common ground and work to build alliances for the betterment of all sides of issues. I have no hidden agendas and will tackle each issue from the perspective of what is best for the city of South Lake Tahoe today and in the future.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: As a high school coach, I have lived in a glass house for over 25 years. I have learned the best way to accomplish anything is to be honest and straightforward. The citizens of South Lake Tahoe have a right to know what their government is doing and why, and I will work from that premise.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: In looking over the 2015-2016 budget, there are a few areas I feel need to be addressed. We

need to come with a long-term solution to road maintenance, we need to protect the senior center and we need to relocate the streets corporate yard from Rufus Allen to D Street. I also believe we need to look into forming a public/private partnership to build a field house, a structure that can accommodate year round recreation.

Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage?

Please explain: The \$15 minimum wage will be the law by 2022 and to me it is far more important to be prepared for its impact than to debate its merits.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain:

I support Proposition 55. I am a strong advocate for education and believe this is a good way to ensure monies earmarked for education will not be diverted. I also believe in supporting the healthcare programs that this initiative is designed to fund.

Describe three attributes for a successful council:

I believe a city councilperson must be a good listener, passionate and open minded: They must listen to their constituents and their arguments on all sides of issues and respect their positions; they need to be passionate about serving their community and doing what is best for all regardless of political, social or personal pressures and they must be open minded enough to be able to change their minds once they have a better understand of all the facts regarding each issue.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined

benefits?: Defined benefits and defined contributions both have their pros and cons. I believe that as an employer, the city should offer its employees a choice between the two and let them decide.

Please explain your position regarding contracting out work

normally done by staff: I am not a big fan of contracted work because it costs the taxpayers more than it would if it were

done by staff and the city does not have the essential controls in place, but there will be times when it is necessary to contract work so that projects are completed in a timely manner.

What is your 10-year vision for South Lake Tahoe?: In 2026, I would like to see the South Shore community as a having a more diverse economy with an increase in higher paying high tech jobs rather than being so dependent upon tourism. A community that is senior friendly, with numerous recreational opportunities, affordable housing, a solid infrastructure, a quality school system and that is a great place to raise a family.

What one vote in the last four years that the current council made do you disagree with and why?: The biggest mistake the Council made was when they stopped televising the comments by the citizens during the non-agenda portion of the City Council meeting. It made it easy to assume that the council lacked transparency and credibility and it lead to a disconnect that has plagued the council ever since.

How many City Council meetings have you attended this year?: I haven't attended any this year because of my work schedule, but I have watched numerous ones on TV and stayed abreast of city issues by talking with several city employees including sitting council members.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, and goals of the city?: I was very informed as to the city's strategic plan, finances, debt and goals when I was chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission when Measure S was passed. I am sure there have been some modifications since then, so I will have to catch up on the changes.

Being on the council means working as a team. How will you work with the sitting members for the greater good of the community?: As a coach, I have always taught my players that

the best way to work as a team is to respect your teammates, even if you don't agree with them, and to follow the Golden Rule of being a good teammate: "Treat each teammate as you wish to be treated!" I intend to practice what I preach.

What should be the three main priorities for the council?: The main priority for any City Council member is to protect and enhance the quality of life for its residents. Having said that, the three current issues that have the most impact are 1) Work on finding a solution to the affordable housing issue; 2) Create new and maintain existing recreational facilities that include everything from walking to biking to organized sports activities; 3) Find ways to grow our economy in a more diverse manner so we are less reliant on tourism and have the ability to withstand economic downturns.

What have you done to make yourself ready to be a council member?: As chairman of the Parks and Rec Commission, I worked closely with City Council members on recreation issues and gained a great deal of respect and understand what it takes to be a city councilperson. As a member of the media, I have developed and maintained friendships from all walks of life in this community and constantly engage in discussion of the various issues our community faces.

What role should government have in housing for residents?: I support [El Dorado County Supervisor] Sue Novasel's plan to create a public/private task force to look into the issue. Only through a partnership can anything be accomplished. One of the things the city can do is look for ways to grow the economy in a manner so we are less dependent on the tourism industry. The telecommuter can live anywhere, if we create an environment where they can succeed in South Lake Tahoe, perhaps we can get them to relocate their businesses here as well.

How can the city partner with the school district to improve high school graduation rates?: The graduation rate at both

South Tahoe and Whittell high schools is above the national and state averages. But we can do more. South Tahoe High School was designed to attract that telecommuter and prepare students for life in the high tech world. If we can bring in more high tech businesses, it will help increase high school graduations.

How can local government support and expand job creation and small local businesses?: The city itself cannot create jobs except for city jobs, but it can create an environment that encourages job growth and small local business growth. I believe that environment needs to be less dependent on tourism.

If you believe in the one South Shore concept, what would you do to further make this a reality? If you don't believe in blurring the state line, why don't you?: We need to think of ourselves as the South Shore community and not California vs. Nevada. I was one of the first to bridge that gap by putting on events that required cooperation from both sides of the state line. It took patience, the need to swallow one's pride and a belief in the spirit of cooperation, so I know it can be done. The state line is blurry to most residents, so we need to build on that fact and I have a history of doing just that.

What are your views on:

a: Vacation home rentals: There is a delicate balance between the economic importance of vacation home rentals and the need to protect the quality of life of our permanent residents. There needs to be some kind of restrictions in place that will minimize any negative impact vacation home rentals may have on their neighborhood but at the same time doesn't have a negative impact on this industry. We have an initiative in place that addresses one element of this issue and we need to give it the full 12 months to determine its impact.

b: Loop road: Traffic congestion on Highway 50 through

Stateline is a major issue causing many people to use residential streets as an alternative. I used to live on Chonokis and I can tell you firsthand that these residential streets were never designed to handle this kind of traffic and how it negatively impacts these neighborhoods. Something needs to be done to get this traffic off our residential roads. The Tahoe Transportation District, the agency who has jurisdiction over any loop road project, has five plans that are at the environmental analysis stage that address this issue. I want to wait until all the analysis is complete and review them before deciding to support or oppose their loop road project.

c: City streets: Our streets take a beating between the amount of traffic they have to sustain and the wear and tear they receive being in this mountain environment. We need to develop a long-term plan to maintain our roads and in fact our entire infrastructure on an on-going basis.

d: Relationships with other public agencies: Every public agency has an agenda based on that agency's philosophies. The only way to work with them is to find common ground and build a relationship that fosters an environment of collaboration.

e: Recreation: We are in the business of recreation. We need to continue to create recreational opportunities, build more recreational facilities and maintain the ones we have. It should be one of our top priorities.

f. TRPA defined commodities: I support most of the elements in this definition, however, I also believe is room for exceptions, in this case regarding affordable housing. TRPA plays an important role in every decision made in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and I am hopeful they can find a way to ease the financial burden on developers of affordable housing.

g. Transient occupancy tax measure: The transient occupancy tax is designed to improve the city's recreational facilities.

I wholeheartedly support this tax measure.

h. Sales tax measure: *[He deleted this question.]*

i. What do you want the additional sales tax money to go to?:

I am a firm believer in creating affordable housing, but I am not sure any additional sales tax money spent on this would be enough to have much of an impact. I am leaning toward preferring that any additional money go toward roads, but I remain open-minded.

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: My ancestors were the first people of European descent to settle in what is now the town of Alturas, Calif., in 1870, just north of Lake Tahoe. They were among the first to build cabins in Lake Tahoe in the early 1900s, in fact my aunt used to tell me stories of her visits with Mrs. Knight in Vikingsholm.

As a coach you work with a lot of young people, how will you handle being surrounded by adults?: In order to be a successful coach, you have to work with adults in the school system in much the same way you do adults in city government. You must learn the art of transparency and diplomacy, I welcome the challenge. I love working with young people, it keeps me young of heart and I keep up with all the latest trends in communication. I will continue to coach, just not in high school.