Divided South Lake council threatens Ski Run BID future



By Kathryn Reed

Nearly one-third of the money it takes to maintain Ski Run Boulevard's landscaping and bike trail is in jeopardy of disappearing.

Every year the business improvement district that includes more than 70 businesses and property owners in this area of South Lake Tahoe must come before the City Council to renew the BID. On Tuesday it was not approved. Neither was it denied.

Councilmen Jerry Birdwell and Hal Cole recused themselves because of, respectively, owning property on the street and nearby. Because the matter involves money it necessitates the remaining three to vote in unison for the BID to go forward.

Councilman Bill Crawford abstained. Abstaining is allowed without cause or reason needing to be given.

"I am not opposed to what is going on at Ski Run. But over the years all kinds of public money was spent there," Crawford told *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting. "No one bothered to talk to me about why I abstained two weeks ago so I don't know what silly game they are playing. I think we can get out of the business of having to dicker with this group every year."

The vote Crawford referenced was when the council voted to have it on this week's agenda, which was not a monetary issue.

It was agreed Tuesday that the issue would be brought up at the next council meeting – June 1.

Brian Des Rochers and Barbara Tenney, both board members of the Ski Run BID, spoke at the meeting. They have a commitment from Crawford to sit down in the coming days to get his view on the matter.

“It wasn’t quite what we anticipated. It definitely was shocking,” Des Rochers said of the vote after the meeting.

Nonetheless, Des Rochers said the businesses would continue with the On the Run theme, events like Saturday’s cleanup day, the June 5 bike festival and parade, and the third Thursday night of the month for live music starting June 17.

The reality is the money allocated to the BID that is threatened was for landscape maintenance, not for marketing and events.

If the allocation is not approved by the council, that body will have to decide if finding the money in the general fund to maintain Ski Run, partial funding or letting it turn into something like the weeds along Linear Park on Highway 50 will be the option. (The latter keeps happening even though the now defunct Core 24 Charities helped get a water line put in by Tahoe Meadows for irrigation and gave the city $20,000 to beautify the area, which hasn’t happened.)

Redevelopment money ($5,000 this fiscal year) has been used to pay for a consultant to run meetings, fly her in and put her up in a hotel. It’s not known why one of the lodging facilities on the boulevard didn’t offer a free room. Money also went to pay for meeting spaces – all were on the boulevard.

“(Redevelopment funds) can’t pay for ongoing maintenance, but they can be used to help stimulate new business development,” explained Gene Palazzo, who heads the city’s Redevelopment

Agency. “They need some seed money to get things going. Redevelopment can help with that.”

The BID has requested another $5,000 for this fiscal year that would be spent on nonprofit incorporation fees, a website and newsletter startup costs. Because those dollars were wrapped into Tuesday’s entire BID proposal, they will not be forthcoming at this point.

The city’s Parks and Recreation Department oversee maintenance of the boulevard between Highway 50 and Pioneer Trail. (The marina side is not in the BID.)

Parks Director Gary Moore said for fiscal year 2010-11 it is projected to cost $29,900 to maintain that stretch of the city.

The money would go to:

• $11,800 – landscaping. This includes fixing sprinklers, mowing, edging, replacing dead trees or trimming broken limbs.

• $5,300 – water. There is a meter on each end of the boulevard.

• $4,600 – electricity. There are 80 light standards. (With LED lights being provided by a state grant, that cost is likely to come down in future years.)

• $4,000 – bike trail maintenance. One mile of pavement is on each side of the road.

• $4,200 – light maintenance. More than 20 bulbs are replaced each year, and ballasts need repair.

The money would come from:

• $11,300 – BID. The property owners pay $2 per linear foot of frontage on Ski Run. Businesses are assessed a percentage of their gross income. All of this is collected in July via

business license renewals.

• $10,000 – Measure S. Each mile of bike trail receives $5,000 for maintenance. An exception by Measure S overseers allows this money to be used on lighting issues with the theory being the bike trail is used at night by cyclists.

• $8,600 – Parks and Recreation general fund.

The BID collected $10,500 for the 2009-10 fiscal year that ends Sept. 30. This means the maintenance for the boulevard should not be in jeopardy this summer. But it's not known for certain.

Finance Director Christine Vuletich said in an email response to a phone message that she could answer questions today about the issue – but that didn't work for *Lake Tahoe News'* deadline.

The question to her would have been: With the money collected based on a July 1-June 30 fiscal year per business license fees and the city on an Oct. 1-Sept. 30 fiscal year, is the money collected for the BID divided between two fiscal years or used solely in what would be an upcoming fiscal year?

The money collected for and by the BID members is essentially a self-tax. That is why Mayor Kathay Lovell does not understand Crawford's reluctance to continue on with the 7-year-old BID.

"To me it's a no-brainer. It doesn't cost us anything," Lovell said.

No one in the BID's jurisdiction protested the assessment.

It's possible the BID members could collect the fee themselves. But the money would not have to go to landscaping. They could use it all on marketing, promotions and/or events.

This means the city would still be left with the decision as

to what to do about landscaping on Ski Run Boulevard. When the California Tahoe Conservancy put up $1.5 million for the bike trail, lights, curb and gutter the deal was the city would maintain it all. This means with a BID the people on the street pay for it and without a BID it will most likely come out of the general fund – which means other locations in the city could see fewer dollars.

Volunteers needed for annual water quality testing

The 9th annual Water Quality Snapshot Day is May 22 in the Lake Tahoe Basin, Truckee and Reno.

Sponsored by California Trout, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, UC Cooperative Extension, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Incline Village General Improvement District and the Truckee River Watershed Council, the day is about testing the water quality of Lake Tahoe's watersheds as well as Pyramid Lake

To volunteer, register here or call Jenny Hatch at (530) 541.3495.

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Nearly 80 apply to be South Lake Tahoe city manager

Publisher's note: ***Updated May 18 at 9pm.***

By Kathryn Reed

About 80 people are interested in being the next city manager of South Lake Tahoe.

The deadline to apply was May 17, though resumes will be accepted by consultant Bob Murray and Associates if they are postmarked by that date.

Bob Murray would not say how many people he intends to refer to the City Council to interview.

“The only comment I’m going to have for the press is the number of candidates and I should have the accurate count (Wednesday),” he told *Lake Tahoe News* on Tuesday.

In the extremely brief and somewhat terse conversation, Murray said as of Sunday he had 64 applications. “I will not identify if there are local candidates. That is privileged information,” the consultant quipped.

“Privileged” is an interesting response considering his fee comes from taxpayer money and the person to be hired will be working for the taxpayers at their expense.

This isn’t the first time Murray has concealed information from the public in relation to hiring a city manager. In 2002, he was hired as the headhunter when Dave Childs resigned.

Members of the community were chosen by city officials to interview a few of the candidates in what amounted to a closed session. When Dave Jinkens was chosen these people knew before the name was released to the public. What influence they may have had in the decision and who exactly they were remains a well kept secret.

Murray was also the consultant paid with taxpayer money after Kerry Miller resigned. He found Childs.

Transparency has been an often-used word at City Hall this year. With the history of this consultant, the view is already murky.

In April the council voted 3-2 to hire Murray again, this time for no more than $15,000.

Mayor Kathay Lovell said she expects Murray to whittle the list to a dozen or so candidates. She said the final applicant number Murray told her is likely to be near 80.

On the other end of the spectrum is Councilman Jerry Birdwell who would like to look over all the resumes.

Lovell voted for Murray, Birdwell did not.

Lovell said a community panel would be assembled to give input into the process. How that will work has not been determined.

Current City Manager Jinkens told the council early this year he would be leaving when his contract expires in August. He started with the city in 2002.

Susan Wood contributed to this story.

Candidates forum in South Tahoe

The South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Candidates Forum for the offices of El Dorado County judge, sheriff and assessor.

The forum is May 25 at 6pm at the South Tahoe Senior Center at 3052 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Fundraiser provides extras for Douglas schools at the lake

Tickets are still available for Saturday's "50 Ways to Love Your School" fundraiser.

Whittell High School’s spring auction will transform MontBleu casino in Stateline into a walk down memory lane. There will be a silent auction, wine toss, fast-paced live auction featuring nostalgic items, dinner, dancing and more.

Proceeds will benefit the students at Whittell High and Zephyr Cove Elementary schools. Last year’s event distributed $40,000 into the classrooms with technology such as smart boards and other teacher tools, sports uniforms and equipment, enrichment activities and field trips.

The event website lists where tickets can be purchased for the May 22 6pm event, sponsorship opportunities and auction items.

For more information, call (530) 307.8658 or email lv2plan@aol.com.

Tails in Tahoe

Two-time Olympic freestyle medalist Shannon Bahrke will be the guest of honor at the inaugural Tails in Tahoe weekend June 5-6.

The two-day event will include a host of pet-related activities aimed at raising awareness about animal well-being and funds for the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe. Events will be in Tahoe City and the River Ranch Lodge.

The weekend kicks off June 5 with the K-9 Encounters Pet Expo at the Boatworks Mall Green in Tahoe City. Activities will include Humane Society pet adoptions, a dog wash, a Kids Pet Art Show, the North Tahoe Frisbee Fetch Championships, an agility demonstration by the Ready 2 Run Agility Club, an “Ask a Trainer” session by Ace K-9 Academy, the Strut Your Stuff

with Your Mutt Fashion Show and the Hometown Hero presentation to Shannon Bahrke. Live music and an outdoor BBQ will complement the afternoon activities, which run from noon-3pm.

On June 6, the River Ranch Lodge hosts the Seventh Annual Truckee Duckee Derbee and the Dogz in Dudz Contest on its outdoor deck. The rubber duck races are called the “most unpredictable two minutes in Tahoe,” as the rubber duckies must negotiate the fickle currents and eddies of the Truckee River. Cost to sponsor a duck is $10 and the top five ducks are awarded a portion of the overall pot.

The Dogz in Dudz Contest precedes the Derbee and prizes will be awarded to the most stylish and creative canines. There is no cost to enter the contest. All canine companions are encouraged to wear their favorite K-9 T-shirts (think Black Dog, Big Dog, Naughty Dawg). A special prize will be awarded to the crowd favorite.

Live music, a huge raffle and an outdoor barbecue add to the festivities.

Bahrke, who has two canine companions, will serve as the head judge for Dogz in Dudz Contest.

The TDD pre-race party starts at 2pm with live music and registration for Dogz in Dudz. The costume contest will start at 3pm followed by the TDD at 4pm.

For more information and pet-friendly accommodations go to gotahoenorth.com or call (530) 581.0181.

LTCC student art show highlights year of work

The culmination of a year’s work will adorn the hallways of Lake Tahoe Community College when the annual student art exhibit opens. The opening reception is May 23 from 2-5pm in the LTCC commons.

The students involved come from a variety of backgrounds.

Student artist Karl Schwiesow grew up in Homer, Alaska. Watching and working with his father, a marine fabricator, Schwiesow learned early on how things were built. His childhood was spent building boats with his father, skiing and playing in the snow, and drawing – always drawing. When Schwiesow entered high school, he was first introduced to formal art classes.



Karl Schwiesow

After graduation, Schwiesow left the isolation of Homer, following the snow to pursue his love of skiing. After moving to Washington for several years and then to Tahoe and working as a carpenter, Schwiesow was encouraged by his fiancé to pursue art.

Schwiesow became a staple in the studios of the LTCC Art Department, where he continues to hone his artistic skills. He produces work across the curriculum in ceramics, wood and metal sculpture, painting, drawing, and printmaking.

In 2009, Schwiesow participated in Sierra Nevada College's invitational show for area colleges. His sculptural piece "Cube" won first place in the show and the attention of Sierra Nevada's Art Department staff. Schwiesow was invited to interview and submit a portfolio. As a result of that meeting, Schwiesow was awarded a full tuition scholarship to Sierra Nevada, where he will begin in this fall. Schwiesow graduates from LTCC in June with his associates in art.

More than 400 pieces will be on display in LTCC's 2010 Annual Student Art Exhibit. The show opens May 23 in the main commons of the Lake Tahoe Community College campus. The show will continue through June 19, and is open to the public.

Stop by the LTCC campus and place your vote for the "People's Choice" award at the exhibit.

Girls Gone Wild filming in South Tahoe

A massive pink bus is parked in front of Whiskey Dicks Saloon in South Lake Tahoe. This is because Girls Gone Wild is looking for the hottest girl in Lake Tahoe.

Segments for an upcoming reality show on HDNet will be filmed at the bar.

The party starts at 9 tonight. Women get in free; guys need to pay $10, which includes a DVD.

The theme is "naughty school girl."

For more information, call (530) 544.3425. The bar is at 2660 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

DCSD offers superintendent job to Washoe County employee



By Kathryn Reed

Douglas County School District has a superintendent – assuming she accepts the position.

It took two votes Monday night for the board to unanimously agree Lisa Noonan should take the helm of the district. Noonan has also been interviewing in Michigan.

Board President Teri Jamin said a message was left for Noonan after the board's decision. Assuming she says yes, a contract will need to be negotiated as well as a start date. Ideally, Noonan would start by July 1, but her commitment to Washoe County School District is likely to be a factor.

Interim Superintendent John Soderman has indicated he would stay beyond his June 30 agreement. He has also said he would help mentor Noonan if the board so desired.

Noonan is chief academic officer in Washoe. She is two steps removed from the superintendent's job in Washoe.

One of the things that impressed Douglas board members during Noonan's in-depth interview last week was her approach in the mock coaching exercise.

"Everyone felt her strengths benefit us. Her management style

we felt is effective," Jamin told *Lake Tahoe News*. "One of the things she discussed (in the exercise) was looking at the successful student who has graduated and where that student was at different levels in their educational career. She talked about working backward instead of just working on remediation of the unsuccessful student."

The board has had several meetings in the last month trying to get a majority vote on one of the four finalists. The initial vote on May 17 at the Minden office was 6-1, with Tom Moore the lone no vote. His preference was David Jensen. On May 3 the board voted 4-3 not to hire him.

When a board member suggested the group vote again to make the decision unanimous, it became a 7-0 decision to hire Noonan.

The room was full Monday night, mostly with staff. No one from the public spoke.

Noonan has worked for four school districts in Nevada and California. She started her career in 1983 as an elementary schoolteacher.

She has a bachelor's from Humboldt State University, master's from San Diego State University and doctorate from UNR.

Noonan also has her private pilot's license. She is married, has three stepchildren and four grandchildren.