Lake Tahoe’s temps are not to be taken lightly



If you’re a first-time visitor to the cold waters of Lake Tahoe, be aware that the possibility of becoming hypothermic while involved in water activities is greater here than in warmer climates.

The combination of high altitude and cold alpine water may quickly fatigue a swimmer or water sporter.

Also remember, anyone under 12 years of age is required to wear a Coast Guard approved life jacket while boating on the lake. You must also carry enough life preservers on board for everyone.

– Sallie Ross-Filgo South Lake Tahoe Fire Department

Recreation, fire, revenues top S. Tahoe council’s priorities

By Kathryn Reed

Raising revenue, including via taxes, which would fund recreation; dissecting the workings of the fire department; and prioritizing capital improvement projects dominated a

nearly four-hour meeting Saturday of the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

The lively discussion among the five, along with the city manager and finance director, also touched on the future of the airport, what's going on with the concrete-rebar hole at Stateline, and how staff is overworked and keep having more work piled on.



South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry talks finances and priorities Aug. 11 with the council. Photo/Kathryn Reed

An irony was at the end of the meeting there was a discussion about how long the regular council meetings are. This took place in the fourth hour when the meeting was supposed to be three hours. Talking less was the emphasis – and being concise.

Suzie Alessi, city clerk, said more public praise and less public criticism of staff would go a long ways.

She is giving a workshop today to staff about efficient staff reports. That is one way meetings may be streamlined; by providing council the material they desire in the most logical manner.

Jim Boylan with Pathfinders Consulting of Carlsbad facilitated the meeting. His $12,000 fee included the Aug. 11 workshop along with time spent with staff to elicit their thoughts, concerns and desires.

The overriding message is that no matter what the council sets as goals and priorities, the workload cannot increase based on current staffing levels. That is why council needs to finally make specific decisions, leave staff alone so they have time to actually get their work done and not waffle on policy decisions.

“The message is ‘we can provide core services and not much more’,” Boylan relayed to the council from staff. He explained how when council says something is routine business, it still consumes time and resources.

Boylan will cull all the information he has obtained into a report for the council and staff by the end of the month.

Only three members of the public attended the meeting. One was City Council candidate JoAnn Conner – no other candidates were in attendance other than the incumbents.

Future of recreation

The council agreed a recreation master plan needs to be developed.

Then in 2014 the voters are likely to be asked to increase the hotel tax and institute an amusement-entertainment tax. These sources of revenue would then fund the recreation plan.

Most of the council agreed increasing taxes to merely fill the general fund is not what they or their constituents want.

Fire department issues

Councilman Tom Davis is most concerned about outdated equipment.

Even though negotiations are under way with Lake Valley Fire Protection District regarding consolidation of the departments, the county entity has not backed down from mandating that the city have functioning equipment to bring to

the table.

Staff is an issue for South Lake. An unsafe structure exists now because the incident commander doubles as someone working the scene, too.

What to do with the aging Station 2 will be explored.

Looking at how Lake Tahoe Community College wants to expand the fire academy, fire science program and build physical resources could affect what the city does.

Mayor Claire Fortier said in six months she expects to have a "holistic views of the fire department." She said with that knowledge it will better drive the budget discussion about this department, too.

Nearly 50 percent of the city's entire budget is allocated for public safety – police and fire. It was pointed out by City Manager Nancy Kerry and reiterated by councilmembers that the cities filing for bankruptcy in California sacrificed other departments for public safety so that at some point revenue-generating sections were essentially non-existent. Kerry said South Lake Tahoe is on the edge and needs to be aware of this as priorities are decided.

From the midyear revision of the current budget to what is projected for the next fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, fire is the only department to have its expenses increase. Part of this is reflected in the recent hiring of three firefighters and programmed raises. Firefighters were given a raise last year because they were the first to come to the table to agree to other budget cuts.

Other items

• Aug. 30 is the date to settle the dispute with Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board regarding the stormwater permit. South Lake Tahoe's stance is that it does not have the

money to do everything Lahontan is mandating. This ties into the city figuring out its priorities. Out of four items related to that permit, it can comply with a quarter.

• Harrison Avenue is near the top of the list of things to get done.

• Staff will be asked to present to council how much work it will take to go forward with the Stateline and Tahoe Valley area plans that would need to be completed in an updated Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Regional Plan. Then council will decide which to pursue first. Transportation, including the Loop Road, would be part of the Stateline discussion.

• An area-by-area paid parking plan will be brought back to the council. (In the working budget for 2012-13 is $150,000 from paid parking.)

• Council at its Aug. 7 meeting agreed to have someone go after the unpaid transient occupancy tax. This remains a priority, with a conservative estimate of net revenues of $50,000 in the next fiscal year.

• A capital plan for equipment replacement will be devised.

• Fortier and Councilwoman Angela Swanson will form the subcommittee to work with Kerry to formulate a collaborative approach to getting projects in the ground regionally.

• The council may broach Douglas County commissioners when the two elected bodies meet Oct. 23 about having them pay to help keep Lake Tahoe Airport open. There is a precedent for this.

• If all employees don’t agree to a 2 percent pay cut, more layoffs are inevitable. This is to cope with the nearly $1 million budget deficit.

• The council wants a future workshop to discuss the airport, decide if a request for proposal to privatize the airport should go out, what to do regarding the settlement agreement,

and look at land uses for that area.

• The council would like movement on the rebar-concrete that was once going to be a convention center. Bill Owens of Owens Financial is working on a plan that would divvy up some of the area, but nothing has been solidified.

OHV owners in Nevada must register vehicles

A Nevada law requiring owners of off-highway vehicles, including dirt bikes, to register and title their vehicles went into effect July 1.

All owners of off-highway vehicles manufactured in 1976 or newer must register their vehicle and properly display the registration decal in order to legally operate their vehicles in Nevada.

OHVs purchased prior to July 1, 2012, must be registered by July 1, 2013. Titles are optional for OHVs purchased before July 1, 2012. OHVs purchased after July 1, 2012, must be registered and titled within 30 days of purchase.

Registration applications are accepted and decals are issued by mail only. For additional information, call (775) 684.4381.

Artists showing off their work at Valhalla

For years Valhalla has been hosting artists during the summer months for the Artist in Residence program. This various artists are in the Vikings Room annex located inside the Valhalla Grand Hall.

Each featured artist is generally on site from 10am to 4pm. Artists can choose to exhibit their art, sell their work, set up a work station and produce art, or even offer mini-lessons to future artists.

The Artists in Residence Program offers a unique opportunity for locals and visitors to meet artists and learn more about their work. The exhibition is free.

Featured August artists are:

Kit Night is an award-winning painter and member of Oil Painters of America. She’s known for her uplifting and radiant color. Her work, which is influenced by jazz, redefines how we think of contemporary still life, which

includes large oils of glasses. She will also be showing smaller work in a variety of subjects including some new plein air landscapes. Kit will be in residence through Aug. 20.

Peter Steinhart is an artist from Palo Alto. He describes his

artwork for the free showing as “Thirty-six Views of Tallac”, borrowing from Hokusai’s first volume of his famous views of Mt. Fuji in Japan. He will be in residence from Aug. 23-29.

The Tallac Historic Site is located two miles past the intersection of highway 50 and 89, just past Camp Richardson, on the lake side of Highway 89. Turn right on the street with the sign Valhalla.

Nevada parks has more than $1 mil. to hand out

Nevada Division of State Parks is seeking pre-applications for the 2013 round of funding for the Recreation Trails Program. Pre-applications will help Nevada determine the need for the $1.064 million is has.

Federal, state, city, and county governments, special governmental districts, trail organizations and private individuals are potentially eligible for the funds. Eligible projects include motorized and non-motorized trail projects for new construction, maintenance and trail related facilities. Trail education projects are also eligible.

While submitting a pre-application is highly recommended in order to assist in the successful allocation of these funds, it is not required.

Past projects include the multiuse Jumbo Grade trailhead in Washoe Valley, Shoshone Off Highway Vehicle Trail, Tahoe Pyramid Bikeway, and the Blue Tree trail system.

Contact Jenny Scanland for a pre-application and assistance at

(775) 684.2787 or jscanland@parks.state.nv.gov.

The 2012 manual is online, with the 2013 manual coming out soon.

Lakeview Commons going to the dogs for fundraiser

Peace, love and puppies is the theme of an Aug. 18 fundraiser for the Lake Tahoe Humane Society.

Tahoe Regional Young Professionals is putting on the free event at Lakeview Commons in South Lake Tahoe from 1-5pm. The ’60s-themed party provides locals, visitors and kids of all ages, an afternoon filled with music on the beach, costumes, games, contests, vendors, food and beverages.

The event will focus on raising funds for Tahoe’s four-legged friends, which are also invited if they are leashed. There will also be a puppy standup paddle race.

Attendees are encouraged to wear ’60s attire, although it’s not required. The beer garden offers attendees, 21 and older, to purchase PBR and Blue Angel Pale Ale.

For details and times on all events, go online.

Questions may directed to TahoeTRYP@gmail.com.

Fundraiser at Ehrman Mansion raises money for Tahoe icon

Sierra State Parks Foundation and California State Parks announce a rare opportunity to experience behind the scenes at Pine Lodge, the Ehrman Mansion, at Sugar Pine Point State Park on Aug. 31 from 5 to 8pm.

Tickets are $50 per person, with proceeds earmarked to provide critically needed funds for maintenance and repairs at Pine Lodge. Planned projects include an electrical system upgrade, lathe and plaster repair, window repairs and more.

Guests will be treated to after-hours tours starting between 5 and 5:30pm. These leisurely tours will visit areas not normally viewed by the public such as the Children's House and the mansion's third floor servants' quarters.

Following the tour, wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served on the front porch.

Space is limited and reservations are required – (530) 583.9911.

South Tahoe gardeners celebrate 50 years of playing

in dirt

A group of 25 gardeners is not content with making their yards enjoyable. They have been spreading their love of playing in dirt throughout the South Shore.

On Aug. 14 the South Tahoe Garden Club will be sharing 50 years of gardening history with anyone who wants to listen. The free event is at the Tahoe Tallac Site from 10:30am-12:30pm. Walks will be given through the gardens, and stories of the lawns and gardens of the past will be told.



Gardening club members at the Tallac Site. Photo/Provided

The group formed in the 1960s by a handful of women seeking a social activity with a purpose. They chose gardening. Ideas were shared, speakers brought in, and trips to nurseries and gardens near and far were typical doings. Many public programs have been presented to the basin in the past years and over time, the women (sometimes with help of husbands) landscaped Happy Homestead Cemetery, Barton Memorial Hospital, a small shade area at the county library and the garden planted next to the Baldwin Museum at the Tallac Site.

The Baldwin garden was difficult because of the multitude of rocks found. They have been used to create a dry creek bed.

Colorful birdhouses are found at the garden, too. This keeps with the history of the site because Dextra Baldwin put a dry creek bed in her garden along with an abundance of birdhouses.

For the last 10 years, the club has maintained this garden and in 2011, planted trees in memory of members who have passed on.

New this year is the Gathering Garden installed by the Washoe people and the Green Team of the U.S. Forest Service helping with gardening.

The group sticks with 25 members and has five on the waiting list.

The Tallac Site is on Highway 89, past Camp Richardson if headed north. Turn right at the sign saying Tallac Historic Site.

Tahoe Expo promotes regional geotourism

Tahoe Expo on Sept. 8-9 is a geotourism showcase collection of fun, educational, and sustainable adventures around all 72 miles of Lake Tahoe, as well as Truckee, Reno and Pyramid Lake.

Through guided Adventure Tracks, the Tahoe Expo aims to cultivate a deeper connection with the watershed and inspire visitors to realize sustainability in their lives. Each Adventure Track is made up of one to three activities including lunch, and land or water transit to and from. Each activity is hosted by local experts, organizations, and businesses from South Lake Tahoe to east of Reno.

Most of the Adventure Tracks will take place on Sept. 8, and include tours of the Upper Truckee River ecosystem by kayak, yoga classes led on paddleboards on the lake, and a photo safari to see Nevada's wild mustangs run free on the range. There will also be a boat ride showcasing a live underwater feed from below the surface of Lake Tahoe, captured from a submarine piloted by underwater explorer and conservationist Scott Cassell. On Sept. 9, tour a "green makeover" of a local residence, or check out the 10th annual Tour de Tahoe – America's Most Beautiful Bike Ride – during which more than 2,500 cyclists will bike around Tahoe.

For more information and registration, go online.

Furniture sale benefits Clean Tahoe

Clean Tahoe's Furniture Sale & Antique Silent Auction to benefit the Dinner Table Project is Aug. 18 from 9am–3pm.

Antiques and other furniture for sale may be previewed in advance from Aug. 15-17 from 1-4pm at 921 Eloise Ave., Unit B, South Lake Tahoe. This is the same place the auction will be.

Silent auction items are two antique hutches, white antique

couch, antique dresser, antique rocking chair, and an antique cherry wood buffet.

Other furniture items: nightstands, end tables, couch, entertainment centers, recliner, computer desk, and miscellaneous chairs.

Want to donate a nice piece of furniture to the sale? Call (530) 544.4210.