

Tesla deal prompts economic benefits debate

By Matthew L. Wald, New York Times

When Nevada lured Tesla Motors to the Reno area to build a giant battery factory, a triumphant governor, Brian Sandoval, proclaimed that every dollar his state was spending in tax incentives and other subsidies would yield \$80 in economic activity.

But experts in industrial development say that his estimate is not so clear-cut. The calculation, they say, relies on two big assumptions: that the factory, which is to be built on a scale never tried before for a battery plant and is to employ 6,500 people, will achieve the radical cost savings that Tesla envisions, and that all the business it spurs will go to local companies. And even then, not all of the \$80 would reach governments; most of it, in fact, would go to the private sector.

A crucial issue is that whenever a state offers an incentive for a company to build a factory, the economic stimulus is rarely concentrated in the surrounding area. Building and equipping the battery factory, for example, will cost about \$5 billion, and while some of that money will have to be spent in Nevada, many of the equipment purchases, for example, cannot be.

“Are there any factories in Nevada that make the equipment to manufacture lithium-ion batteries?” said Greg LeRoy, the executive director of Good Jobs First, a nonprofit watchdog group in Washington that generally opposes such state incentives. “I don’t think you get to count that as a Nevada impact.”

That logic did not carry the day in Carson City. Late

Thursday, the Nevada Legislature, in a special session, approved a \$1.3 billion package of incentives, which Governor Sandoval immediately signed into law. He thanked the Legislature for its comprehensive review, in a session that he had called 48 hours earlier.

The package was more than twice as large as the \$500 million that Elon Musk, Tesla's chief executive, had said a month earlier that he was seeking. But Sandoval stressed that it would provide a lift for a state that has not recovered from the recession, and increase its gross domestic product by 4 percent.

Read the whole story

Swanson: 'Diversify our economy around recreational tourism'

Publisher's note: Lake Tahoe News asked the seven South Lake Tahoe City Council candidates a series of questions. All are the same except for one that is specific to each candidate. The responses are being run in the order LTN received them.



Name: Angela Swanson

Profession/work experience: Grant writer and school facilities planning consultant.

Age: 53

What organizations, committees or groups are you or have you been involved with?: I was elected to the City Council in 2010. Prior to that I was elected and served on the governing board of the Lake Tahoe Unified School District. In addition, I've been active in community service since moving to this community in 1993 with husband and infant son. I volunteered in my kids' schools, served on PTA boards, volunteered in youth sports, and Girl Scouts. In addition, I have had the privilege of serving in many official capacities, some highlighted below.

Appointed service:

- Ad Hoc Legislative Committee member, CSLT City Council 2011-2013
- Board member, Tahoe Transportation District, 2010-2014
- Board member, CalTahoe Emergency Operations Service Agency, 2010-2014
- Board member, California Tahoe Conservancy, 2010-2012
- Board member, Sacramento Division, League of California Cities
- Board member, Solid Waste Tri-County Commission
- League delegate, Transportation, Communications & Public Works Committee, 2011-2014

- League delegate, Employee Relations (PERS) Committee, League of CA Cities, 2014
- Ad Hoc delegate, Water Bond Task Force, League of CA Cities, 2014
- Ad Hoc delegate, CEQA Reforms, League of CA Cities, 2013-14
- Steering Committee, 56-Acre (Lakeview Commons) Project.

Why are you running for City Council?: I am running for re-election to the City Council to continue the successes of the past four years and to keep our city on track for continued improvement. It's been a privilege to serve this community as a council member the past four years. We have made significant progress in moving the city to greater economic, environmental, and social sustainability. My decisions have supported a strong fiscal policy that took us from a sea of red ink to a balanced budget and a plan to meet our pension and healthcare liabilities. We're investing in infrastructure. After decades of neglect, streets are regularly paved and bike trails added. Pioneer Trail finally has sidewalks and streetlights, Harrison Avenue is newly revitalized and the hated "Hole" is a retail center. We have our first neighborhood playground at Bonanza Park, Lakeview Commons bustles year-round and Regan Beach is funded for improvement.

There is still much to be done. Protecting our lake requires economic investment in our aged infrastructure. It's time to simplify permitting, improve broadband service and spur investment at the Y. We need to diversify our economy around recreational tourism, special events, a destination college, and telecommuting professionals. We must also address the needs of seniors, the working poor and our failing mental health system.

Why should people vote for you over the other candidates?: 1. Performance. No other candidate has the track record of success that I've achieved in the past four years on council. Some examples. I championed the Harrison Avenue revitalization project, getting it constructed in three years, after 20 years

languishing in the “plan pile.” The first-ever joint-agency Recreation Master Plan is now completed. It is the blueprint for projects and investment in our new recreation-based economy. When I joined the council, we laid-off over 65 employees and slashed services. In September we will approve our second balanced budget that also includes over \$3 million in capital investment. I pushed for infrastructure investment and delivered a repaving program, new bus stops, and at long last – lighted sidewalks on Pioneer Trail.

2. Vision. Citizens in South Lake Tahoe should be represented by council members that can articulate, coalesce and achieve visionary change for our community. My work with Harrison Avenue, the Loop Road, the turnaround in the city’s culture, and my work building public/private sector partners evidences this skill.

3. Effective leadership. I believe effective elected leaders communicate clearly, demonstrate follow through, are consistent in their logic and actions, have passion for their work and the ability to build consensus. Whatever the topic – building a new recreation economy, plastic bags, the Highway 50 realignment, TMDL regulations, union negotiations – I have consistently used leadership skills to guide my decision-making and to persuade my fellow council members to follow suit.

What do you think is the most pressing issue facing South Lake Tahoe and how will you deal with it?: Jobs and Economic Development are hands-down our most pressing issues.

I will pursue a three-fold strategy that starts with stabilizing and expanding existing business, giving them incentives to grow and/or build. We must build on these strengths particularly in the areas of eco-tourism and destination education, cultivating a well-rounded product in those industries. Tax and commodities incentives that get government red tape “out of the way” and enhance zoning are so

often the missing ingredients to existing business expansion. These tools are key to growing new business, too.

Second, the city must develop the infrastructure necessary to draw new economic growth. That infrastructure begins with adequate cell and broadband coverage, continues into recreational facilities including bike paths and continues with road improvements. Businesses seeking new locations want to move to attractive communities with high quality housing stock at a variety of price points, good schools and a technological and physical infrastructure capable of supporting their operational needs. We lag behind in these areas. We must not be afraid to invest in ourselves. I've watched our city suffer for years because public and private owners have failed to maintain their assets.

Third, use the resources of our private sector partners like the city's recently formed economic development task force and both of our chambers, to recruit new businesses in the areas of recreation/tourism, destination education, and health and wellness. Building on these established bases is smart and logical. We need to also seek out and recruit the tele-commuting young professional who would appreciate the luxury of living and working in Tahoe.

If the city cannot reach an agreement with its bargaining units, are you willing to go to impasse? Why or why not?: Yes. The city has been direct and transparent about our present and future financial challenges and the role employees need to play in righting the course. To ensure we are a sustainable organization, we must collectively share the burden of righting past policies that led us into unfunded PERS and health care liabilities. If that means we must go to impasse as part of the negotiations process, then we will do so.

How would you resolve the CalPERS and health care issues in the city?: I am the only member of the city to work directly with legislators, the governor's office and fellow city

officials to solve PERS. As a member of the League of California cities PERS committee and the ad hoc task force, I work directly at the state level to resolve these problems. This experience confirms for me that the city is on the right track.

The CalPERS and health care unfunded liabilities should have been dealt with 10, event 20 years ago. I hear from many current and former staffers who tell me they knew then that the program was unsustainable. The problem? Nobody was prepared to make the tough decisions. I have been a consistent advocate to address these issues fairly. Toward that end I supported council's action course initiated by council over the past two years to resolve the city's unfunded CalPERS and health care liabilities. In my first year on the council, employees began to pay the matching share into PERS (8-9 percent). The next year, council voted to set aside additional funding against our PERS indebtedness. By refinancing our PERS liabilities repayment schedule, we will be able safeguard our employees retirements and eliminate the red ink.

Health care. We have to hold the line on health care costs. Presently, our \$30 million/year General Fund must fund over \$4 million on health care. Of that nearly \$2 million goes to retirees. We must balance the needs of the current workers with the retirees. We also have an obligation to return dollars back into our community. On the table is a proposal that provides equal access to health care for all with a net savings to the General Fund. This proposal would also fully fund retiree health care, eliminating a problem that past councils allowed to linger for a decade.

What is your opinion about term limits for the council?: I believe the voters of South Lake Tahoe thoughtfully choose their council members. The real question is how do we broaden and enrich the candidate pool.

If the city has positive cash flow, where should the money be

spent?: Uncommitted funds should go first into improving our community's built environment. I am proud that this council has adopted and funded the first Capital Improvement Program (CIP) of substance in a decade. We've identified four key projects – road repairs, moving the maintenance yard from the 56-acre complex to our new industrial location, improving Regan Beach and renovating the rec enter. Any additional funds should go to the unfunded projects on the list.

We are learning from the lessons of the past. Don't throw money away. Invest in capital.

What are your ideas for increasing the city's revenues?: Cities are funded primarily from three sources – sales and property taxes and TOT. Our most effective way to raise the bottom line is to stimulate the economy so existing businesses thrive and new business is drawn to South Lake Tahoe. We are a notoriously difficult place to develop because of our regulations. The city needs to focus attention on smoothing the permitting and planning process and do more to facilitate private investment. We also need to implement the Tahoe Valley and Tourist Core area plans. These blueprints identify prime areas for private investment.

What is your vision for the 56-acre project?: As a member of the 56-acre steering committee, I collaborated in forming a strong vision for the site. It is the heart of our community and needs to be developed to complement the work done at Lakeview Commons and nearby Harrison Avenue. Moving the city's maintenance yard from the site, make the existing rec center into a water complex, building a new indoor complex would create a more complete recreation experience as would adding interpretive trails and signage. An outdoor amphitheater and revitalized campground are additionally required amenities. Lastly, the senior center and museum should be transformed to include a full-bodied community center complex.

What would you do to improve relations with El Dorado County?:

Good relations require relationships. That is why I have made the effort to build relationships with the full Board of Supervisors, the CAO and key staff members. I know many of the Placerville City Council members and have worked to learn about the issues important to them. This is why I volunteer my time with the League of Cities and other organizations in Sacramento.

Is the city on the right course with restructuring debt and focusing on recreation? Why or why not?: Yes. Restructuring debt took the budget from red ink to black and resolved 20 years of poorly negotiated agreements. The public has told us that recreation is the new hub for our tourist economy. Investing in the public infrastructure needed to support recreation is our contribution to economy revitalization. With our fiscal house in order and our recreation infrastructure in place, South Lake Tahoe will be poised for additional economic development and expansion.

Name one vote the City Council made in the last four years you are proud of and one you are disappointed in – why?: The vote to fund the Harrison Avenue renovations. I was the champion for this project, working with the owners, staff, and consulting team to resolve 20 years of debate. The result – a project that nearly completed representing over \$5.8 million in public infrastructure improvements. More, the project includes an important partnership with the local property owners and businesses that generate economic and environmental wins for our community.

I am disappointed that council chose to delay the second phase of the plastic bag ban. It is frustrating to revisit ordinances repeatedly. Council's job is to set policy then stay out of the weeds when it comes to implementation. I was particularly disappointed that the delay was implemented for no clear purpose. There was no protest from business or individuals. Instead there was an outpouring of support for final implementation from nearly 200 residents. I believe

council missed an opportunity to listen to and serve our voters.

What is working in the city and what isn't; and how would you go about changing what isn't working?: The citizens survey guides me in this area. They said they wanted infrastructure, better communication, a balanced budget, built environment improvements. Four years ago we turned this around, making the cuts to balance the budget.

Being on the council requires working with four others. Give readers an example of how you work well others in difficult situations with differing opinions: SnowGlobe is an excellent example of working well under pressure under contentious circumstances. I was newly elected when SnowGlobe came to town, catching us all by surprise with its booming bass levels, crowds and congestion. I spent long hours on the phone with irate residents across the city listening to their complaints and working with the city and staff to solve the problems. Council received strong protest and criticism in the weeks following. It was important to me that council allowed community members to express their opinions. More, we needed to ensure that conflicting opinions were respected. It wasn't easy, but the post-SnowGlobe discussions resulted in many good suggestions for improvement.

When the question of bringing SnowGlobe back for a second time came up in the fall, there was great opposition. I am proud of my work, along with my fellow council members, to identify opportunities to correct mistakes and provide a better concert experience. I drove through neighborhoods every night of SnowGlobe that second year, visited the site and sat in the daily site briefings. Being informed and pro-active gave me the tools to problem-solve issues with residents and businesses.

Now, going into our fourth year of the SnowGlobe music festival there are still challenges, but the most significant

debate is past. Instead we have a city/community partnership working each year to minimize problems. Looking forward we have no venue after this December.

What is your opinion about the following topics:

- **Ferry service on Lake Tahoe?:** Ferry service is an interesting prospect that could potentially better the economy and vitality of the Tahoe basin if it is tied into an effective multi-modal transportation system that runs frequently and reliably. The full analysis that assesses the economic and environmental viability of ferry service is still months from completion. I believe that finding revenue to make both ferry and bus service free to riders is an important part of transforming Tahoe as a recreation destination.

- **Loop road?:** First, we don't have a project yet. The project is an opportunity to draw in \$60 million in improvements to that detour.

Second, the more relevant question is this. Is the city of South Lake Tahoe prepared to leverage that roadway investment to revitalize the adjacent residential and business neighborhoods per our old Ski Run and Stateline community plans? If the answer is yes, as I believe it should be, we have the rare opportunity to make major improvements such as a neighborhood park, greenway and bike path, pedestrian lighting, quality workforce housing and mixed use housing/retail opportunities. This is the critical question. If the city is unwilling to take advantage of the investment opportunity presented by the loop, it's not worth the effort.

- **Future of Lake Tahoe Airport?:** Expanding the general aviation (GA) activities at the airport is our most viable option for creating a profitable operation. Commercial air service is not viable without a multi-million dollar subsidy, a sum unaffordable for the city nor on offer from other jurisdictions. There is a business model for GA that can

transform our airport into a bustling, profitable venture. Pairing our GA activities with expansion of routes/carriers/gateways at our regional partner airports (Reno, Sacramento), we can attract more visitors across a broader geographic and economic spectrum.

- **Increasing the transient occupancy tax?:** Until we have a clear picture of what citizens would support there is no reason to raise TOT. Believe there are projects the community would only consider a TOT increase (or any other type of tax) if it is linked to a specific improvement or benefit that is fully vetted by the community. A 1 percent TOT increase will generate about \$500,000 a year, a one-half cent sales tax increase about \$2 million. Implementing either requires voter approval.

- **Changing the vacation rental ordinance to reduce the number of such units in neighborhoods?:** During my first term on council, we have dealt with the vacation rental ordinance at least once a year. When this issue came up in July, I asked staff to prepare a detailed analysis of our code enforcement activities, identifying the types and volume of complaints and whether the city is adequately enforcing existing codes and ordinances for vacation rentals.

The public voted to not elect you supervisor, why do you think they will re-elect you to the council?: Missing a spot in the general election by 12 votes was disappointing to the nearly 1,000 voters who gave me their vote of confidence.

Tell the voters something about yourself that they may not know: I'm a farm girl who grew up working alongside my parents in the fields and working with livestock. As a result, I say the word almond like I it rhymes with salmon.

CVS gaining customers with tobacco policy

By Jonathan Berr, MoneyWatch

Consumers hold CVS Health in higher esteem than ever in the wake of the second-largest drugstore chain's decision to quit selling tobacco products. CVS says that decision will cost it \$2 billion in annual revenue.

CVS has three outlets on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe.

According to the weekly YouGov BrandIndex survey of 4,300 people, 13 percent of likely shoppers indicated that they would consider shopping at CVS the next time they plan to visit a drugstore. That's up from 9 percent earlier this year, although it lags the 15 percent rating of Walgreen, the top drugstore operator. No. 3 player Rite Aid trailed both companies with 7 percent.

When the no-cigarettes news first broke in February, CVS' perception scores equaled Walgreen's for 10 days, according to YouGov BrandIndex.

[Read the whole story](#)

Audit: CalPERS lacks strong

pension spiking controls

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

California's largest public retirement system lacks a routine method for detecting pension spiking, according to a new report released by state Controller John Chiang, and the pace at which it does check employers' payroll is glacially slow.

The report also blasted a pay tactic that auditors estimate will allow some public employees to legally boost their pay and increase their pension payouts by up to \$800 million over the next 20 years.

Chiang's report focused on 11 employers that contract with the California Public Employees' Retirement System to administer their pension benefits. While auditors found no instances of spiking – a practice that inflates an employee's salary through promotion or other means specifically to hike their retirement benefits – the review did reveal CalPERS' auditing unit is understaffed and doesn't use advanced technology to ferret out spiking.

In a statement accompanying the report, Chiang said CalPERS has a "generally passive approach to the problem" that invites abuse.

CalPERS President Rob Feckner countered that the \$300.7 billion fund is deterring spiking with information drawn from its 3-year-old computer system.

Read the whole story

Expect garbage rates on South Shore to rise

By Kathryn Reed

South Tahoe Refuse customers on the South Shore are likely to see their rates to go up by more than 3 percent starting Jan. 1.

The garbage company is asking for a 3.7 percent hike in South Lake Tahoe and Douglas County, and 3.5 percent in El Dorado County.

Terry Trease, STR's controller, told *Lake Tahoe News* the increase is needed to keep up with the annual spike in the disposal fee the company pays at the landfill, rising insurance costs, and adjustment to the interest rate on the outstanding \$10 million loan for the facilities.

Employees received a 2 percent pay hike on July 1. Workers also received raises two years ago. Trease said there were no raises during the height of the recession.

When the economy took a turn, STR reduced the employees' pension contribution from 10 percent to 3 percent. It is now at 4½ percent.

The Waste Management Joint Powers Authority this week discussed the potential rate hike. This board – made up Nancy McDermid from Douglas County, JoAnn Conner of South Lake Tahoe and Norma Santiago with El Dorado County – is the first to vote on any potential increase. Then the three take the proposal to their respective boards. The JPA board members will vote at a special meeting on Oct. 23. It could not happen Sept. 10 because rate review was not complete.

An independent consultant is tasked with analyzing STR's

proposal and then making a recommendation to the JPA board. It is possible the recommendation would be for a lower rate increase; seldom is the outcome a higher rate. That person will dissect STR's revenues and expenses, factor in allowable profit and then make a recommendation.

"A certain percentage of our costs go up no matter what we do," Trease told the JPA board. "We've cut operations as much as we can. We are trying to do more with less."

STR, per its franchise contract, may ask for a rate increase every three years. In the interim years rate hikes are based on the Consumer Price Index, with fuel costs being one of the main factors. Rates increased at the start of this year for all three jurisdictions: 2.78 percent increase in South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County, and 2.73 in Douglas County. Per month, this equated to 69 and 79 cents for city and El Dorado County residents, and 45 cents for Douglas residents with one 32-gallon can.

Part of the rate review will be to analyze STR's proposal to alter the loan it has to pay for the South Lake Tahoe plant. The current interest rate is $1\frac{1}{2}$ percent, but it's a variable rate. With projections calling for interest rates to escalate after the new year, the company wants to obtain a more secure rate so it plans to lock in a rate of 3 percent for a three-year period. (The loan will be paid off in 10 years.)

Trease told *LTN*, "This gives us protection."

He said they looked at going for a longer term fixed rate, but those rates were between 5 and 6 percent. Before the $1\frac{1}{2}$ percent was secured, STR was paying 4 percent. It is trying to stay below that number.

Despite drought, ski gear-clothing sales rise

By Hugo Martin, Los Angeles Times

While California suffered through the driest winter on record, ski gear and winter clothing sales rose nationwide last season thanks to frigid temperatures in other parts of the country, according to an industry trade report.

Businesses that sell snow gear and winter apparel reported \$3.6 billion in sales in the 2013-14 ski season, up 7 percent over the previous season, according to an annual report by the Snow Sports Industry Association.

Although the snowpack in California's Sierra Nevada fell to less than 15 percent of the season average, snowfall and frigid temperatures elsewhere, particularly in the South, helped boost sales of winter clothes, gloves and hats, the report said.

The sale of ski equipment rose 2 percent last winter, while the sale of winter clothes jumped 4 percent and accessories like hats and gloves shot up 14 percent, the report said.

[Read the whole story](#)

Sierra air getting cleaner, but smog tide still rises

By Jeff Wheelwright, National Geographic

SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK – This great park in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California attracts a million visitors a year, who come mostly in summer to see the largest trees on Earth. After Labor Day the heat and the tourists dissipate. So does a less welcome visitor: air pollution.

By a misfortune of topography, Sequoia National Park sits above an industrial-agricultural basin, the San Joaquin Valley, whose dirty, sun-baked air has nowhere to go but up. Along with its neighbor, Kings Canyon National Park, Sequoia has the worst air quality of any park in the country. In 2013 it exceeded the national health standard for ozone on 59 days, according to measurements taken at the Ash Mountain entrance station, at 1,400 feet. Up at 6,500 feet, where the giant sequoias grow, excessive levels of ozone occurred on 41 days.

On such days visitors arriving from Fresno or Los Angeles, among the most polluted cities in the nation, are greeted at the Sequoia visitor center by the same “code orange” air quality alert they left back home. Hiking or biking in parks that are almost entirely designated as wilderness, “untrammelled by man,” they may find themselves wheezing or suffering chest pain. (Read “Fifty Years of Wilderness” in National Geographic magazine.)

And yet the air is much better than it used to be.

The health standard for ozone is 75 parts per billion (ppb), averaged over eight hours. Recently the staff of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommended that the standard be lowered to between 60 and 70 ppb – sparking the usual heated debate in Washington between business representatives and environmentalists. The argument may seem a million miles from Sequoia-Kings Canyon, but Annie Esperanza, the air resources specialist at the parks, is cheering the regulators on.

“We tell them, if they do the work, we’ll see it here first,”

Esperanza says. “We’re the canary in the coal mine.”

Read the whole story

Climate change threatens half of North American bird species



LTWC volunteer Wayne McKnight throws a golden eagle into the air as way to exercise it. Photo/John Adamski

By Louis Sahagun, Los Angeles Times

Half of all bird species in North America – including the bald eagle – are at risk of severe population decline by 2080 if the swift pace of global warming continues, the National Audubon Society concluded in a study released Monday.

“The scale of the disruption we’re projecting is a real punch

in the gut,” said Gary Langham, chief Audubon scientist.

Langham led an Audubon study that examined more than 500 bird species and determined that more than 300 in Canada and the United States face large climate shifts that could reduce their habitat by half or more by 2080. The changing environment will force birds to adapt to new habitats with different temperature and precipitation rates if they are to survive.

The first comprehensive species study of its kind, it will be used to help federal wildlife officials develop improved strategies to conserve bird species, whose abundance and migratory patterns depend on specialized habitats, such as forests, grasslands and coastal areas.

By 2080, the bald eagle, the national symbol of the United States, could see its habitat decrease by 75 percent, the report says.

Read the whole story

Voters get a peek at S. Tahoe council candidates



Seven people are vying for three seats on the South Lake Tahoe City Council. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Defining the role of a council member and the use of eminent domain were the only questions all seven South Lake Tahoe City Council candidates were asked to answer at a forum Wednesday night.

The event was a bit schizophrenic, as the questions were all over the place and not everyone had the opportunity to answer each one. It left several people gathered at Lake Tahoe Golf Course more confused about who to vote for and where the candidates stand on issues than when they arrived. This was in contrast to the South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association forum the following morning at which the same three questions were asked of the four candidates who showed up.

The last question asked Sept. 10 by moderator Evon Yakar was racist in nature. When candidate Bruce Grego asked Yakar if he was questioning whether race played a role in marketing, Yakar merely repeated the question. The question was: With 70 percent of Lake Tahoe's visitors being from California and many are non-white in California, should this change our approach to becoming a world-class recreation destination?

(Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce and the *Tahoe Daily Tribune* were the sponsors.)

That particular question was asked of the four challengers. Grego said don't change things because of the color of people's skin. Matt Palacio, who works in sales for Sierra-at-Tahoe, said the resort has changed its approach by offering different food choices, and more lessons and helmets to cater to a population that is less comfortable with taking risks. Wendy David did not articulate her answer. Austin Sass said the city is not in the business of marketing, but added the ski and lodging industries are well versed in attracting an international clientele.

As for the responsibility of a council member: Sass said look to the future; Grego – listen to the community; Palacio – set

direction; David – have a vision; Tom Davis – focus on the economy; Brooke Laine – do your homework; Angela Swanson – do the business of the city thoughtfully.

Regarding eminent domain:

- Swanson: Use it when all other options have been exhausted.
- Sass: Would use it, but hopes to never have to.
- Palacio: If it's for the greater good. (His family had land taken in the Bay Area to build a bridge.)
- Grego: Won't use it; believes it has been abused in South Lake Tahoe.
- Laine: OK as a last resort.
- Davis: Would use it in extreme circumstances.
- David: Would not be her first choice.

When it came to the demeanor of the council Davis had to be asked the question twice because he avoided answering it the first time.

- Davis: He called this the most progressive council he's been on, that there will be differences, but at the end of the day you stand by the majority decision.
- David: Important to be professional and respectful at all times.
- Palacio: He sees political infighting and believes personal issues need to be resolved out of public view.

Here are some key comments from the candidates:

- Sass: Create a vision for the entire South Shore that people can embrace, know where the return on investment is

going to come from, create town hall forums to engage the public, make the trails for biking and hiking easier to get to.

- David: Advocate of transparency, three-quarters of the town looks old, do something with the dilapidated hotels, plastic bag ban is the right thing.
- Palacio: Need better jobs to stop the brain drain of younger residents, raising the transient occupancy tax is short-sighted, supports Tahoe Prosperity Center.
- Grego: Night meetings could attract more input, need more flexibility with land use, never favored paid parking.
- Swanson: Government needs to get out of the way for businesses to succeed, Tahoe Valley Area Plan will be good for the Y, TRPA's Regional Plan is good.
- Laine: Disappointed more policies are not enforced, need community vision, old hotels should be allowed to be converted to different uses.
- Davis: Nothing wrong with representing minority opinion, wants free bus service, believes town is on the right course.

At the Sept. 11 lodging meeting, the candidates were all asked the same three questions. Only one of them was in the room at a time. All the candidates were invited.

Question: What is your position on raising the transient occupancy tax?

- Davis: The council can't just do it; it would have to go to the voters. He prefers raising average daily rate and occupancy. TOT accounts for just less than one-third of the city's revenues.
- Grego: Believes the motel industry is taxed enough.

Believes the private sector supports the public sector enough.

- Swanson: Not appropriate at this time. Could see doing so in the future for recreation.
- Palacio: Against raising TOT. Says other locations like San Diego have a lower hotel tax rate.

Question: Are you in favor of the loop road?

- Davis: He prefers cars driving in front of a business instead of around it. Will not use eminent domain for it.
- Grego: Has never been in favor of it.
- Swanson: Wants the loop road. Believes it will bring profound changes for the positive to the area.
- Palacio: Supports it, citing how most tourist areas don't have a four-lane highway with a middle turn lane in the middle of town.

Question: What is your vision for the city to bring more tourists to town?

- Davis: Infrastructure, including complete streets, will attract new businesses.
- Grego: Land use regulations need to be flexible so businesses will come to town. Government needs to get out of the way.
- Swanson: City needs to invest in its own infrastructure.
- Palacio: City needs to remove barriers, streamline regulations, and bring in recreation events in the shoulder season.

Vail Resorts buys Park City Mountain Resort

By Christopher Smart, Salt Lake Tribune

Vail Resorts has purchased Park City Mountain Resort for \$182.5 million in cash, creating the country's largest ski resort covering more than 7,000 acres.

The Colorado resort announced the acquisition Thursday morning, adding that the sale resolves all litigation with Powdr Corp., Park City Mountain Resort's parent company.

Read the whole story