

Ex-parks commissioner against Measure B

By Jerome Evans

Measure B on the November 3rd ballot is no more and no less than a raid on the Measure S funds that were voted by the people of South Lake Tahoe nine years ago. A stealth raid, it may be said.

It would add Little League play fields to projects eligible for funding from Measure S revenues. And not only the projects themselves but also their maintenance, without limit in time or amount.

Proponents of Measure B have said that there is no opposition to what they propose. I assure you that there is opposition in this community, very substantial opposition. That opposition comes not only from members of the Bicycle Coalition but also from residents of our community, young and old, who enjoy cycling to work and to play, and who understand the importance of extensive and well maintained bike trails to visitors, young and old.

Proponents of Measure B have said that the measure has been approved by this council, the board of supervisors, and the Community Facilities District Recreation Joint Powers Authority (JPA). It was the JPA, a three-member body (one council member, the District 5 supervisor, and a representative of the Paradise Park board) responsible for administering Measure S funds, that put this measure on the ballot. It has not been endorsed by the Board of Supervisors and has only now come before this council. And it did not go to your Parks and Recreation Commission for its consideration.

Proponents of Measure B contend that there is a large pot of money generated by Measure S that ought to be tapped for

another purpose inasmuch as it is unclear when additional bike trails will be constructed and need maintenance funds. They ignore the fact that planning for the Greenway project, which will provide a long-dreamed-of bike trail connection between Stateline and Meyers, continues, as does planning for bike trails as an important component of the Lakeside Commons project. No one can be sure when funding for these two major projects will be forthcoming, but it is clear that assurance of funding for their continuing maintenance will be essential to their receiving state support.

Assurances by the proponents, and stated in the ballot argument, that this would be a "temporary" diversion of funds are belied by the wording of Measure B itself.

Proponents of Measure B argue that Measure S promised four new playfields and a practice field but produced only a single playfield. They choose to ignore the fact that our community now has two new playfields surfaced with artificial turf which gives them the capacity, according to Steve Weiss and others, of four grass fields each. They also ignore the fact that the provision of these two fields has greatly reduced wear and tear on the Little League fields on Rufus Allen Boulevard, a fact that has been evident since the first field was completed.

Proponents of Measure B failed to consult with the Bicycle Coalition, which, with Ty Polastri's leadership, has done so much toward making South Lake Tahoe a "Bicycle Friendly Community" (city web site), while they were formulating their proposal. Thus they failed to seize an opportunity to meet and discuss a mutually agreeable result. This despite the fact that many agree that existing bike trails are greatly in need of repair.

Finally, in their haste to move their proposal past the voters, the proponents have failed, as yet, to produce a concrete plan for their project, anything resembling an

environmental impact statement, or details as to actual costs of their proposal. One might think that they would have learned something from the recent experience of the Lake Tahoe Unified School District.

Again, Measure B is simply a raid on Measure S funds, a stealth raid, that should be rejected by this council and the voters. Let the proponents go back to the start, if they wish, put together a solid plan, engage the community, and then give it another try.

That, I believe, is the way we do the public's business in this community— or it should be.

Jerome Evans has been active in the South Lake Tahoe community; he also a former member of the city's Parks and Recreation Commission.