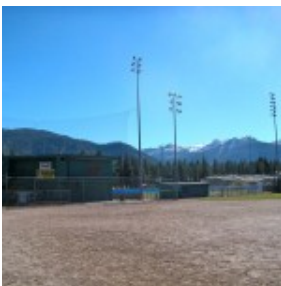


Measure B dividing recreation community

By Kathryn Reed

After proponents and opponents verbally attacked each other, the South Lake Tahoe City Council voted 5-0 in favor of endorsing Measure B.

The Nov. 3 ballot measure is a revision of Measure S, which was passed in 2000 by voters in El Dorado County living at the lake.



Passage of Measure B would renovate ball fields in South Lake Tahoe.

What is dividing the recreation community is the reallocation of bike trail maintenance money for improving the baseball fields near the old South Tahoe Middle School.

Measure S money can be spent on maintaining new trails, not ones in place prior to 2000. The problem is only 7 miles of trail have been put in because lawmakers in the wake of California's budget sinkhole hijacked funding for those projects.

The reality is Measure S will never be able to accomplish what is in the document – mostly because the funds aren't there and the projects cost too much.

When the measure was initially talked about, surveys of local residents said bike trails are of the utmost concern, then ball fields and last was an ice rink.

The ice rink got built first, a multiuse field at Lake Tahoe Community College is in the ground and 7 miles of bike trails that could be maintained with this money have been laid.

The \$625,000 that is collected annually is spent on:

Bond principal and debt of nearly \$400,000.

Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District, \$50,000 a year.

Ball field maintenance, \$50,000 year. What isn't spent stays in the account.

Bike route maintenance on trails put in since 2000 at \$5,000 per mile up to 25 miles for a total of \$125,000/year. About 7 miles have been put in to date.

Administrative costs, which includes about \$4,000 a year to John Upton.

Jerome Evans, a former city recreation commissioner, called Measure B a stealth raid on Measure S funds when he spoke before the council Oct. 20. He said the field at LTCC and the one at South Tahoe Middle School that was built since Measure S was passed, albeit without those funds, are the equivalent of the four ball fields promised in Measure S.

John Cefalu, a backer of ball fields for years, accused the biking community of being shortsighted and having a narrow view of the matter.

Accusations were hurtled back and forth about who knew what

when and who should have been invited to meetings and whose opinions are more valid.

The *Tahoe Mountain News* published a lengthy story in February about the likelihood of Measure S being revised. The story talked about upcoming meetings. The information has been disseminated other places as well, so the electorate had the opportunity to be informed prior to the revision reaching the ballot.

The joint powers authority, which is made up of a city representative, a county person and a member of the Tahoe Paradise board, met several times earlier this year before getting the revision on the ballot.

It will take a two-thirds majority to revise the \$5.8 million bond measure and special tax. No matter how people vote, single family residences in the district will continue to be assessed \$18 a year on property taxes through June 30, 2030. Larger properties pay on a sliding scale.