

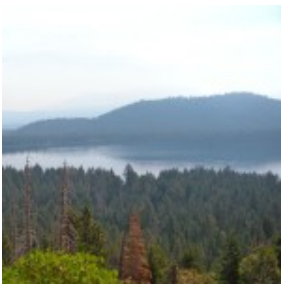
Fallen Leaf Lake board president resigns

By Susan Wood

Another chapter unfolds in the continuing saga of the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District.

The CSD board is expected Saturday to discuss how to fill one of its seats left vacant with President Dana Clark resigning last month amid turmoil over who will run the marina and general store. The meeting is at 11am at Lake Tahoe Airport in South Lake Tahoe.

The board and vocal community members have debated the issue for months, resulting in shouting matches, harsh feelings and even the threat of legal action. In some cases, the quandary has caused a rift between board members leaning toward an option of the district running the concessionaire and some in the community insisting it should stay in the hands of Fallen Leaf Landing. The company, managed by the John Rich family, has run the dual operation that's the hub of the mountain village outside South Lake Tahoe for 14 years. No contract exists between the two entities.



The water may be tranquil, but the business of Fallen Leaf

Lake is
anything but
that.

Photo/Kathryn
Reed

“It appears to me that some community members have already made a decision, and the CSD will run into more legal resistance if the board does anything other than contract with Fallen Leaf Landing. (It) may have the experience of running this operation, but that is not the only factor to be considered,” Clark wrote in his resignation letter.

The two sides have fought over issues ranging from accounting practices to an agreeable rate for rent of the facilities.

According to Clark, the district has spent \$7,600 in legal fees with the intent of countering the threat of legal action.

Beyond the monetary issues, the dispute has created arguments between board members and residents of the ordinarily quiet mountain hamlet at the base of the Desolation Wilderness.

“I am unwilling to serve in an environment where my every move and decision is judged and possibly escalated to legal action,” Clark added.

The environment was rocked six months ago when Lee Vestal, the CSD general manager, resigned over disagreements with the community on how to run the district.

Board member Mike Kraft, whose own negotiations broke down with Rich a few months ago, will take over for Clark as president. He wrote a letter to the community declaring the latest departure of such a high profile person within the district represents “the embarrassing truth in our community at this time.”

Kraft commended Clark for all his work, including a major

repair of the marina dock and the move into the new general store in 2003.

It's unclear the direction the board will take in filling the vacant seat or the concessionaire post. A new board member may be appointed or elected this weekend.