

Grego playing political games with medicinal marijuana issue

By Kathryn Reed

“This is a greater danger to us than the Angora Fire.”

Those were South Lake Tahoe City Councilman Bruce Grego’s words as he passionately pleaded for his fellow councilmembers on Tuesday to close down the three medicinal marijuana facilities by the end of October.



Bruce Grego at the Sept. 14 South Tahoe council meeting received zero support.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

“How far we going to let this go?” he asked.

His four colleagues looked dumbfounded and essentially sat on their hands. Without two others thinking it would be a good idea to schedule a special meeting to consider invoking emergency powers to shut the pot clubs down, Grego was left

spewing hot air.

Grego never explained how the pot clubs are worse than the June 2007 fire that destroyed 254 homes, caused \$150 million in damage and cost \$23 million to fight. Then there are those 3,100 acres that burned and the ongoing restoration costs. Throw in the lost tourism dollars, the money other entities and businesses lost, and it's hard to know how Grego could invoke pot clubs and Angora Fire in the same sentence.

Grego mentioned Steve Kubby by name. Kubby is one of 10 people running for three council seats and is a strong advocate for medicinal marijuana. It's unusual for a sitting councilmember to inject himself so blatantly in a race and take sides.

South Lake Tahoe leaders have said they want a second economy beyond tourism. Clearly, with the number of clients the three collectives in town have, it's not just locals getting medicine. Kubby wants South Tahoe to be known for world-class pot dispensaries.

Oakland has embraced this type of business and is taxing the heck out of them to generate revenue. Other cities are saying they want nothing to do with pot clubs.

South Lake Tahoe has a habit of issuing a business license and then deciding it doesn't like that type of business – think Broc's Puppies. The collectives have business licenses now, so clearly someone in the city said this is allowable.

Grego let out his rant during council member comments on Sept. 14. He said he was surprised to learn pot is being grown in the commercial areas of town and that some of the dispensaries are growing pot. But all of this has been said at council meetings he has been at, so he should not have been surprised to learn it at the committee meeting.

Grego and Councilman Bill Crawford are part of a committee working on medicinal marijuana issues. The first meeting was

last week. The next is today at 3pm in council chambers and the following is Sept. 23.

The committee meetings are open to the public.

No one on that committee is a doctor, no one is an expert in pain management, no one is an expert in the whole issue of medical marijuana.

At the start of the council meeting during public comment, 12 people spoke, with one letter read into the record. Most said how they are against the clubs, but want people to have the medicinal pot if they really need it. They didn't propose a way for that to happen, though.

The overwhelming concern is this is not the type of town they want – to be known for a medicinal drug that otherwise is still illegal. (That may change on Nov. 2 depending on how Californians vote.)

They seem to forget it's hard to legislate morality.