

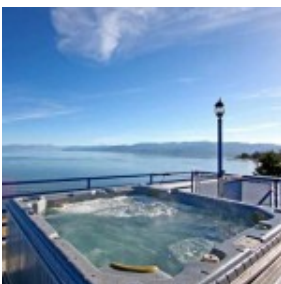
S. Tahoe council pushes back on vacation rental changes

By Kathryn Reed

Normally when anything having to do with vacation rentals is on the South Lake Tahoe City Council agenda, the room is packed, emotions run high and colorful descriptions of tourists' antics are relayed.

June 7 was a little different.

Council members and the public were a bit miffed to know nothing about the proposed changes until the agenda was released late last week. And then the council was not eager to pass what staff brought forward.



Vacation rentals run the gamut in Lake Tahoe.

When Councilmember Bruce Grego asked Community Police Officer Bob Albertazzi if anyone had asked him to rewrite the ordinance, he said no. All he was tasked to do was make administrative changes so all issues except the transient occupancy tax came under the purview of the police chief.

Albertazzi explained while he was in the ordinance he came across things he thought should be changed – like eliminating

the need to post the sign on each vacation rental, how parking is handled, and putting a fixed number on how many people can ever be in a vacation rental.

Councilwomen Claire Fortier and Angela Swanson admitted their children might have been at one of those vacation rentals when the senior class at South Tahoe High School had a party. They would have been violating the rules if Albertazzi had his way.

He had proposed the limit be double the number of people allowed to sleep at a rental.

Mostly the council did not like what Albertazzi proposed. They asked for staff to bring back another proposal in two weeks, at the June 21 meeting. Councilman Tom Davis recused himself from the discussion because of his ownership in the Tahoe Keys Resort.

The vacation rental ordinance has been around since 2003. It's been tweaked at different times.

Jim Morris, president of Lake Tahoe Accommodations, spoke at Tuesday's meeting, saying what the city really should be looking into is vacation rentals by owners not collecting transient occupancy tax. He contends the city is losing out on a half million dollars a year on the rentals not paying the tax.

All rentals are supposed to apply for vacation home rental permit. Then they are supposed to collect the appropriate tax.

Individual property owners don't need a business license for this. Property managers, though do.

This is a list of the 1,239 vacation rentals the city has on record.

In other action:

- South Tahoe is continuing its agreement with Lake Tahoe Unified School District for the 2011-12 school year to have an officer at the school act as the school resource officer. The district will reimburse the city about \$52,105 a year for an officer to be on the campus.
- The council approved the city's Business Plan – the first of its kind. This gives the city an action plan to carry out the Strategic Plan that was approved earlier this year.
- Delayed the workshop on the sign ordinance until June 21.
- Agreed to keep the Latino Affairs Commission at five members unless that commission asks to increase its board. Only five people applied for the position last go-round. One commissioner, at least, believes it should be expanded to seven members. The City Council wants that commission to think about expanding its representation to all ethnicities so it is more of a cultural affairs group.
- Heard a presentation from Sue Rae Irelan of the California Tahoe Conservancy about the South Tahoe Greenway bike trail. Mayor Hal Cole had to recuse himself because the CTC is seeking a right-of-way for the route to go through his property.