

Not all Shore Shore rec measure officials kept in loop

By Kathryn Reed

The treasurer of the board that oversees recreation Measure S on the South Shore just recently found out about the half dozen meetings the board has had this year geared primarily to rewriting the voter approved initiative.

It took a call by an El Dorado County resident to county Auditor Joe Harn in the last few weeks to alert him to what is going on. Harn is also the joint powers authority's treasurer.

"Protocol would be I'd be informed about the meeting. It is unusual that an officer of the JPA would not be informed of the meeting," Harn said.



Pine needles fill in the lines at Tahoe Paradise tennis courts in November 2010.

Meetings to discuss changing Measure S to Measure R so the money allocation could be altered have been going on since

early spring.

On Aug. 8 Harn was told by county Supervisor Norma Santiago about today's meeting. Santiago is chairwoman of the recreation JPA. Other board members are South Lake Tahoe City Councilman Hal Cole and Tahoe Paradise Park board member Deborah Henderson.

At the last meeting on July 29, John Upton said in writing and verbally that an audit of the JPA's books is not necessary. South Tahoe resident Tom Wendell asked the lone paid staff member of the JPA: Why?

Upton said with the JPA writing about eight checks a year that Harn's "strong position is it's not necessary."



Courts at Tahoe Paradise have not been safely played on in years.

Harn on Aug. 9 told *Lake Tahoe News*, "I'm not saying one is necessary, but I have not spoken to John Upton about JPA business in a couple years."

An audit in 2006 by Harn uncovered serious accounting deficiencies. He suggested several changes at that time regarding how the 2000 voter approved measure be handled.

This week he agreed the JPA has little money to spend after it pays bond debt, Upton, and disseminates the money per the

measure's requirements. He said that is all straight forward. What Harn said would be the true reflection of how Measure S money is spent is for the three entities receiving the money to have their auditors do an independent schedule showing what happens with the JPA money.

At the annual meeting two weeks ago where finances are talked about, the JPA board did not mention this more detailed analysis being a possibility or consideration.



When Tahoe
Paradise
courts will
open is
unknown.

Photos/Kathryn
Reed

Harn doesn't even know what Measure R is designed to do.

"If there is not a lot of transparency, normally the voters don't trust you. I found out (about Measure R) from a member of the public, but it sounds like they are about to go to the voters," Harn said.

And he's right. Today is decision day. The board meets at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport for its last chance to stop the process of putting Measure R on the Nov. 8 ballot. The potential cost of the election is the main sticking point for the board, otherwise the three have agreed to the resolution and reasons to alter the measure.

R would allow bike trails built pre-2000 to receive maintenance money and funds to be directed to improving existing ball fields.

As it stands now, there is no more money for ball fields and only post-2000 bike trails receive cash for upkeep.

Tahoe Paradise is allocated \$50,000 a year. This summer two of the three tennis courts at the park were supposed to be resurfaced. In Upton's July 29 staff report he said they would be open this month.

Lake Tahoe News spoke with groundskeeper Steve Dunn at the unfinished courts on Tuesday. They won't be ready for play this month. Dunn wouldn't even give a date because he doesn't know when they will be painted and it will be two weeks after they are painted before people can use them.

It used to cost \$5 an hour to play on those courts. The groundskeeper said the Tahoe Paradise board has not set a fee, but he said he has heard it could be \$10.