

Change in leadership in South Lake Tahoe government

By Kathryn Reed

In a bit of a power play, Claire Fortier was voted by her colleagues on the South Lake Tahoe City Council to be mayor for the next year, but moments later stripped her of two committee appointments she coveted.

It's fairly routine for the mayor pro tem to become mayor the following year. This is what happened this year. And now Tom Davis is the mayor pro tem.

In South Lake Tahoe much of what the mayor does is ceremonial. A big part of her job is to help set the agenda and run the meetings.

But as the city keeps raising its collective voice to be heard in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., the role of the mayor is becoming a bit more important than years past. In large part this has to do with how others view the words "mayor" and "councilmember" – the former carries a bit more clout.



Claire Fortier is mayor of South Lake Tahoe for the next year. Photo/Kathryn

Reed

Fortier said she is ready to lead South Lake Tahoe by building an innovative team, helping reshape the region, and making Tahoe an affordable and fun place to live.

But one person cannot do it alone.

Along with the reorganization of council leadership came changes to committee assignments. This past year Fortier and Councilwoman Angela Swanson were on the Legislative Committee. Now it will be Swanson and Davis.

The Strike Force Committee, something that evolved out of the CEO club, will now have Councilman Hal Cole instead of Fortier. Swanson and Councilman Bruce Grego each lobbied for the appointment, too.

Fortier retains her seat on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board. But she wanted the other committee appointments.

Her colleagues said she couldn't do it all and the responsibilities of the city needed to be shared.

While clearly a bit of politics was being played during the committee appointments, the five practically had a group hug at the end of meeting – saying how wonderful it is to work together.

Later that night they all took time to celebrate Fortier's ascension to the post of mayor at a reception at the Black Bear Inn.