

S. Tahoe residents express dislike for parking meters

By Kathryn Reed

Metered street parking, parking garages, reconfiguring streets, changing public perception about paid parking, paying attention to public transit-walkers-cyclists, and approving future projects with adequate parking were all broached in the daytime meeting.

Most in the audience agreed more parking and paid parking are likely to be more prevalent in South Tahoe in the near future. And they agreed it would be the locals, who are used to free parking, who will probably be the hardest to convince this is what's needed.

How prophetic those two paragraphs from an Oct. 22, 2010, *Lake Tahoe News* article are.

On Feb. 22 – 16 months later – nearly 40 people filled a room at the South Lake Tahoe Rec Center to voice their opinions about the city's proposal to install parking meters in various locations in town and initiate a residential permit system for the section of the Al Tahoe neighborhood closest to Regan Beach.



Parking meters near Stateline generated an

average of
\$4,000 a month
for South Lake
Tahoe between
July-December
2011.

Photo/LTN

Many were loud and boisterous, interrupting Community Service Officer Bob Albertazzi as he tried to answer each question during the 90-minute session. People said they just learned of the meter situation. They said they plan to give the City Council an earful when the issue is back on the agenda March 6.

Meters were on the Feb. 7 council agenda, but were tabled a month to allow time to gather more input from the community. None of the three people who objected to the meters at the council meeting spoke Wednesday night, even though two were in the audience.

The city is banking on generating \$300,000 from the meters. That's revenue that is in the 2011-12 budget. The areas proposed to get kiosks are Regan Beach, Stateline Beach, Venice Drive between Tahoe Keys Boulevard and Tahoe Keys Marina, and Saddle Road between Ski Run Boulevard and Wildwood Avenue.

While Albertazzi said it is not a done deal to put in meters, meters are part of the strategic and business plans, and the five-year budget the council approved in spring 2011. If the council votes not to put in the meters, it must either find other revenue or cut services or staff.

Issues people have with the idea ran the gamut.

One man spoke of how he left the Bay Area because of things like this. He doesn't want Tahoe to change. He said meters

would change the complexion of the community.

JoAnn Conner, president of the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce, said things have changed since Frank Globin owned all of the land that makes up the Al Tahoe neighborhood.

“It’s not like it was when he was here,” Conner said. “What would you like the city to do?”

He said it’s not his job to find solutions.

Judy Cefalu expressed concerns about people being able to find a place to park on Fourth of July to watch the fireworks.

One person balked at having to get extra passes from the city for guests if he were to have a party.

Some believe if paid parking goes in at Regan Beach, all of Al Tahoe should be permitted so the neighborhood doesn’t fill up with beach-goers looking for a free spot.

John Cefalu is worried beach-goers will park on Harrison Avenue or neighboring streets, which would take away parking for business customers.

People want Heavenly Mountain Resort to provide parking for its employees and not have the city allow for this to happen for free.

People are worried with two part-time employees handling parking issues that enforcement in the neighborhoods will be lacking.

Others are concerned the details have not been worked out – like specifics of permits, how long an illegally parked car will stay before its towed, and the number of permits each household will receive.

Many said the amount of revenue is not worth the consternation the meters will create. While some wonder if South Lake will

be the most expensive place in the basin when it comes to lake access.

Albertazzi wrapped things up by saying, "The issue is revenue. Things have changed in South Lake Tahoe. No one has alternatives, so therefore we are trying things. We can't sit back and do nothing and continue to have services deteriorate."

Council meeting:

March 6 at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport. Agenda will be posted online 72 hours before the meeting.