

Endorsement: LTN says Sass, Conner are best choice for South Lake Tahoe City Council



Publisher's note: The following endorsement is from Lake Tahoe News after a team of six community members gathered to hash out who the two best people in the field of five are to lead South Lake Tahoe on the City Council for the next four years.

We believe Austin Sass and JoAnn Conner will best represent South Lake Tahoe on the City Council for the next four years. We believe they are stronger as a team – though they aren't running as that – than individuals. This is because of what each brings to the table.

Sass has the corporate-world experience this town needs. We need someone who can speak the language of big business. Like it or not, there are a ton of corporate entities in town and more are coming – from grocery stores, to department stores, to ski resorts, to hoteliers.

Sass has experience with big budgets. Multimillion-dollar budgets. A budget like the city of South Lake Tahoe has.

The incumbents believe borrowing from reserves and satisfying the state requirement of passing a balanced budget each year means the city has a balanced budget. City Manager Nancy Kerry last month told *Lake Tahoe News* the city is likely to face more than a \$1 million deficit in the next fiscal year – 2013-14. Neither of the incumbents is addressing this reality.

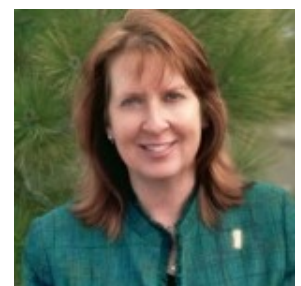
Sass comes from a tourism-marketing background where he worked for Vail Resorts and Aramark. We have a tourism-based economy. We need someone on the council with that background.

On the other side of the spectrum, Conner has a perspective no one else brings. She has lived the non-privileged life of Lake Tahoe. She talks about the whole community. She talks about the people no one else is talking about – the people living check-to-check, small business owners, their employees – the people who truly make this a community.

When *Lake Tahoe News* put out a call to the power structure to show up at Bread & Broth to mix with those who may only get one hot meal a week, she was there that night. She was sitting beside, talking to and breaking bread with a segment of the population the other four candidates don't acknowledge. And, yet, with 60 percent of Lake Tahoe Unified School District's students receiving free or reduced lunches, clearly poverty with a view is a reality for so many.

Conner is the only candidate on the campaign trail advocating for more jobs in this town. She wants this area to have more than a tourist economy and recognizes that a simple thing like broadband would help inspire companies or those working remotely to move to South Lake Tahoe.

She also runs a small events company, so she gets that people want to do more than look at a lake or walk in the woods.



JoAnn Conner



Austin Sass

It may be disconcerting to some that Sass has received money from out of town interests or larger entities. But \$5,000 of his donations came from the South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association. This group *only* represents hotels in South Lake Tahoe. It costs money to get your name in front of voters. He already had to replace signs – and he's not the only one – because people vandalized them. While \$5,000 is a lot of money in some ways, we don't believe it's enough to sway any candidate. After all, it's not like it went into his private bank account.

Combined, Conner and Sass will bring the big and small perspectives to the table that this town and basin need. We need an eclectic mix on the council to move this city forward. We like that both want to promote recreation and both are active.

We can't re-elect someone who when asked at the Oct. 10 Soroptimist candidate forum what vote he would change he said pot dispensaries instead of anything about the hole in the ground. It is partially Cole's Hole. After all, Hal Cole is the one who has said there is no such thing as a performance bond.

And we can't re-elect the other incumbent – a man who seems so incredibly out of touch with the residents of South Lake Tahoe. The depth of Bruce Grego is questionable. Nothing substantive comes out of his mouth.

Clinton Schue doesn't seem to take running for office

seriously, so how can anyone believe he would take the office itself seriously?

While we know Sass and Conner can come across as arrogant, even abrasive, we also know it takes people who are self-confident, a bit opinionated, and definitely self-starters to be successful councilmembers. We also believe the Sass-Conner combo will work well with the remaining councilmembers.

On Nov. 6 (or earlier via by mail) mark your ballots for Austin Sass and JoAnn Conner for South Lake Tahoe City Council.