

# No more free beach parking in South Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

While paid parking has been a reality in some areas of the South Shore for decades, it will be coming to new locations in mid-June.

It was a fairly hostile crowd that gathered Monday night at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center to hear the city's plans. The few who are fine with paid parking could barely be heard because others were disrespectful by talking over them.

The nearly 80 people in attendance were mostly well older than 50, completely resistant to change, and believe because the majority in the room were against paid parking that the other 20,000 people who live in South Lake Tahoe must be on their side and therefore the city should do as they say. Many believe the amount of revenue is not worth the angst.



South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry addresses a question from resident John Cefalu at the May 6 parking meeting at the senior center. Photo/Kathryn Reed

City Manager Nancy Kerry made it clear no one is a cheerleader for paid parking, but the reality is this could be a revenue stream for the city. Projections are the sites where paid parking will go in will net \$150,000 a year. This is from the fee and tickets given to those who don't comply with the regulations.

Kiosks – which are how meters are now installed instead of a stand at each parking spot – are slated to go in on Venice Drive and near Lakeside Beach. Based on feedback from the May 6 meeting Kerry is going to propose to the City Council on May 21 that instead of meters at Regan Beach they go in at the Lakeview Commons area. Venice will be free in the winter.

While all the money had been designated to go in the general fund, meaning the cash could be spent on anything the city desires, that would not be true of money collected at Lakeview Commons. State Boating and Waterways mandates that parking money be reinvested in that area. That could mean improvements to the boat ramp, putting in a viable pier and other upgrades.

It will cost \$2 an hour, with a maximum of \$10 a day. The fee will be seven days a week from 8am to 10pm. It is possible holidays will be more expensive. Altering the rates or waiving the fee during special events like Live at Lakeview concerts on Thursdays is being talked about.

Some people think parking is a new topic around city hall. They are wrong. Parking has been on a City Council agenda four times since Nov. 20, 2012.

This is from an Oct. 22, 2010, *Lake Tahoe News* story:

*“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.”*

*“The consultants started work in July by speaking with nearly 300 people to gather their thoughts on parking in the city. They also have read the 10 or so parking studies the city has commissioned over the years.”*

*“In the in-person survey, which mostly tourists answered, about 70 percent said they would be willing to pay for parking.”*

This is from a March 2, 2011, *Lake Tahoe News* story:

*“The other new source of revenue is via metered parking, especially near beaches. [City Attorney Tony] O’Rourke said most waterfront communities charge to park close to that body of water. The anticipation is this could bring in \$450,000 a year.”*

The projected revenue has been scaled back immensely because no longer is the city going to charge people for their permits – permanent ones or for guests. And the number of locations is not as great as once anticipated.

Residents on streets in about a two block area of where the kiosks will be located will be given free permits for their vehicles to let parking enforcement officers know they are allowed to park there.

Much of Monday’s meeting centered on people saying how they have all these friends who stop by, come to visit for days on end – and they need a place to park. Residents fear they won’t be able to get enough guest permits.

People believe the city will be limiting their guests’

activities. The city's intent is to guarantee locals a place to park on their streets with the permits. If it were permit-only parking, then those who are looking to avoid using the kiosks would have to go several streets from the beaches to do so.

Other places that charge, usually on a seasonal basis, are the U.S. Forest Service beaches, California State Parks, Beacon Restaurant, Tahoe Keys Marina and Ski Run Marina.