

Paid parking may be decided by S. Tahoe voters

By Kathryn Reed

Do the voters of South Lake Tahoe want paid parking?

That is a question a group of residents wants on the June 3 ballot. The goal if voters say remove the parking kiosks, is they would be uprooted 30 days later.

The legwork to get the initiative on the ballot started Wednesday. This is one day after the City Council heard a report from staff about how the program is working.

The names on the document given to the city Nov. 6 are Peggy Bourland, John Cefalu and John Grace.

A grassroots group called Tahoe4Tahoe is behind the initiative. Bourland, who is part of the group, would not say how many people are involved, nor would she say who they are. The group formed out of frustrations with the city in regards to paid parking.

Bourland told *Lake Tahoe News* the point of the ballot initiative is to give the people a voice in the parking decision, adding that the group believes the City Council acted against the will of most residents with the parking program that started this past summer.

However, the language on the “text of the initiative” is much broader than that and could limit the power of the city government.

The text says, “The people of the city of South Lake Tahoe do ordain that the city of South Lake Tahoe be prohibited from enacting any ordinance that would result in a tax, an assessment, a fee, or charge of any kind for the use of public

streets for vehicle parking purposes." It ends with, "Any other ordinances or parts of ordinances of the city of South Lake Tahoe in conflict herewith are hereby repealed."

The next step is for the city attorney to answer the "text of the initiative". Tom Watson has 15 days to write a legal summary that does not exceed 500 words and he must write a ballot title.

It is possible if a legal summary could not be written, that the petitioners would have to start over.

Assuming Watson writes the summary, the Tahoe4Tahoe group must publish the intent in an adjudicated publication, and then take that document to the city clerk. Then the group must get 926 valid signatures on the petition. If certified by the county elections department, it goes on the ballot.

"The way I look at the time frame, it is going to be really, really tight to get on the June ballot," City Clerk Suzie Alessi told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Bourland was of the belief it would not cost the city any money to put the initiative on the ballot. The truth is will cost between \$10,000 and \$20,000, according to Alessi.

The city was not expecting to have any election costs in June, just in November 2014. Because El Dorado County has issues on the June ballot the city would not have the burden of that entire election.

The fee to the city is based on a formula of the county tallying all of its election expenses, take the number of registered voters and coming up with a fee per voter that is then paid by the city.