

SLT city attorney says no to paid parking foes

By Kathryn Reed

The group of South Lake Tahoe residents who want paid parking to go before the voters was handed a setback when the city attorney said he could not write a ballot title and summary.

“At this time the Tahoe4Tahoe committee is exploring their options for a legal challenge to the city’s rejection of our petition request and continue to believe that the voters of South Lake Tahoe deserve the opportunity to decide if they want paid parking on their city streets and public parks,” Peggy Bourland, spokeswoman for the group, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Paid parking has been a contentious issue since the city started talking about putting up kiosks a few years ago. The bulk of the meters was installed this past summer. While the city shows a financial profit, the naysayers are not going away.

Earlier this month Tahoe4Tahoe filed a notice of intent to circulate a petition that would ultimately result in the voters deciding June 3 whether the city’s paid parking program stays or goes.

One of the hurdles to get it on the ballot is for the city attorney to write the summary and title.

City Attorney Tom Watson wrote Bourland saying, “The text as drafted impairs essential government functions, including, but not limited to: the power of taxation, the police power to control public streets and highways, fiscal management abilities, franchising authority and the legislative power to provide for the health and safety of the community.

Additionally, because the initiative is multipart, it potentially violates the single subject rule.”

Bourland requested a meeting with the city attorney. He said no, saying he could not be an advocate for their group and instead recommended hiring private legal counsel.

Time is ticking for the group to meet the deadlines for the June ballot, however there will also be an election in November. But by November the parking program the group doesn't like will in all likelihood have had another summer to be in place.

The City Council after the first of the year is expected to revisit the parking program to potentially make changes and/or solidify what is in place.