

Brakes put on special S. Tahoe parking meeting

By Kathryn Reed

Parking will not be on the Jan. 14 South Lake Tahoe City Council agenda.

The special 7:30am Monday meeting to consider creating another special meeting just for parking was not without drama, though.

Mayor Hal Cole requested the Jan. 13 meeting. Per state Government Code it would take a two-thirds majority to have had the parking issue heard Jan. 14 because the agenda for that meeting had already been posted. In other words, four of the five had to vote for the measure. Cole had the power to call for the item to be put on the agenda without his colleagues' support, but he said he would defer to the council's wishes.

Councilwoman Angela Swanson left at 8:15am before the vote because she had another city-related meeting to attend in Meyers. Swanson had previously been non-committal how she would vote – saying, “I feel like we are catering to one portion of the electorate in addressing the issue. I don't like the precedent it is setting. This is a knee-jerk reaction.” Then she added that she wanted to support the mayor.

Councilwoman JoAnn Conner, as the other city rep on the ambulance JPA, stayed at the council meeting until it was over at 8:22am.

Conner believed it was too important of a topic to push through without careful analysis. Neither the council nor the public would have had even 24 hours to read the staff report

had parking been added to Tuesday's discussion.

Had Conner left early only two of the three remaining members would have needed to support getting parking on the Jan. 14 agenda. And based on the 2-2 vote, Conner made the difference.

She along with Councilwoman Brooke Laine voted no to hearing parking on Tuesday.

Fourteen members of the public were at the meeting. Most are advocates of revoking the entire paid parking program in the city as well as getting a measure on the ballot to do just that. The group says it has the signatures to get it on the ballot, but officials with the El Dorado County Elections Department must still verify them. And there also remains doubt whether there is time for the question to be before voters in June. If not, there will also be an election in November.

The council as of today is slated to discuss the paid parking program at its Feb. 18 meeting. But what won't be part of the council discussion is the proposed ballot measure.