

# David: S. Lake Tahoe is 'tired, faded and dated'

**Publisher's note:** *Lake Tahoe News asked the seven South Lake Tahoe City Council candidates a series of questions. All are the same except for one that is specific to each candidate. The responses are being run in the order LTN received them.*



Wendy David

**Name:** Wendy David

**Profession/work experience:** Lake Tahoe Unified School District teacher's aide 1975-1981, co-director Tahoe Parents Nursery School 1984-1997, site manager CASA El Dorado, South Lake Tahoe 2000-2009, LTUSD board of education 1997-current.

**Age:** 65

**What organizations, committees or groups are you or have you been involved with?:** Lake Tahoe Unified School District, co-chaired our successful \$64.5 million Measure G bond effort. Took lead roles with Measure L and Measure A.

Current commissioner and chair of First Five El Dorado, appointed by the Board of Supervisors, third term.

El Dorado Child Abuse Council, three years as the chair. Spearheaded community forum Poverty to Prosperity,

highlighting and educating our community on some of the very real issues facing the unemployed, underemployed and those incapable of employment, including serious transportation barriers.

Lake Tahoe Cabinet /El Dorado Community Foundation and have accepted their invitation to be a member of the board beginning in January 2015.

Facilitator and member Lake Tahoe Collaborative.

Community Advisory Committee/ Barton Health Foundation.

Angora Fire Fund, the group that was formed to respond quickly, securing and distributing \$1 million in funds to 254 families that lost their homes.

Lake Tahoe Education Foundation, liaison, 17 years.

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra.

Bread and Broth founding member.

Tahoe Magic founding board member.

Appointed as a community leader to committees in planning for our future through Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the prosperity plan.

Also included are youth sports boards, school site councils, family life committee, and community liaison for Senior Project at South Tahoe High School.

**Why are you running for City Council?:** I love my community and have been heartbroken to see it become tired, faded and dated. I feel that it is the right time as I retire from the LTUSD board to step up, bringing my skills to the council and the city. I look forward to being a part of the creation of a stronger and more sustainable economy, enhance our offerings and reputation as a recreational destination, provide jobs for

our community and build allegiances through collaboration with our private and public partners. I am encouraged by our beginning face-lift and look forward to helping to shape the future of South Lake Tahoe.

**Why should people vote for you over the other candidates?:** I will bring a fresh voice to the City Council, coupled with four decades of experience in leadership roles in this community and at the county level, chairing numerous organizations and serving as president of the board of education for 13 years of my 17 years of tenure.

I am a natural facilitator; understand the process of decision-making and embracing change. I listen, collaborate, respect divergent views, and work toward consensus. I believe that I will bring the broadest record of respected leadership to this office.

I am the only council candidate that brings the voice and perspective of our most vulnerable population. I know their struggles, their families and their stories.

**What do you think is the most pressing issue facing South Lake Tahoe and how will you deal with it?:** I believe the most pressing issue for the council will be creating and implementing a budget that plans adequately for the future and protects the present. I believe it is essential to put in the hard work of visioning, planning, working collaboratively and embracing all facets of our community to move forward in this positive direction. It takes money to create the change we want to see. It takes effort, new ways of doing business, cooperation and diligence to have the resources to create change. It takes fortitude and guts. We can accomplish this, which will open doors for the city we envision in the future.

**If the city cannot reach an agreement with its bargaining units, are you willing to go to impasse?:** These are personnel issues that I would not speak publicly to, especially as a

candidate. I can comment that I am familiar and understand the bargaining process and that impasse is a possible help when the parties are unable to reach agreement.

**How would you resolve the CalPERS and health care issues in the city?:** I cannot and will not comment, again, on any issue that is a personnel, closed session item. It would not be fair to fellow council members or to the bargaining units. I do know that this will be an issue that the City Council will grapple with. I can reiterate that I am a fair, respectful, thoughtful and wise decision-maker.

**What is your opinion about term limits for the council?:** This is an interesting question for an elected official who is finishing four consecutive terms. I am not in favor of term limits for the council. I do believe in the power of the public vote and the responsibility of every registered voter to vote, deciding at the polls when it is time for someone to step down and another to step up.

**If the city has positive cash flow, where should the money be spent?:** I would like to see money spent to give incentives to new businesses who have a business plan that buys tired properties on the Highway 50 corridor, demolishes and rebuilds. I have never been as happy as recently to see backhoes and tractors cleaning up our landscape. I would like to see our roads get the attention they have needed for years. I have studied the five-year Community Investment Plan and agree that there are many additional places where we need to revitalize, invest and improve our city and appreciate that they have been prioritized.

**What are your ideas for increasing the city's revenues?:** We can look at the properties we own and how we can increase revenues through usage, buying and selling of properties. We can continue to encourage new business. We can enhance our appeal by continuing to upgrade the physical appeal of our city to visitors. I am looking forward to all residents

ringing in on this question. I hope the council will adopt this as a question of their own.

**What is your vision for the 56-acre project?:** I have been very impressed with the Lakeview Commons project. My vision, as a dreamer and not looking at funding sources, would be to create a community complex of buildings that would include our city offices, a nonprofit organizations building, similar to the Parasol Building in Incline, and a large community meeting area. It would incorporate a new or remodeled recreation center, and a visitor/tourist center that would meet the needs of our tourists, visitors and community residents. This complex would have outside plazas, playgrounds, picnic areas, benches and walkways. It would be a centerpiece jewel the city that would be available for those visitors from around the world and those across the street.

**What would you do to improve relations with El Dorado County?:** Communication and involvement at a county level is essential. As the only South Lake Tahoe representative on a county commission or board at times, I have learned that developing respectful two-way working relationships based on common goals, being informed and transparent about our city's needs, and acting as a passionate advocate for those needs has helped to improve relations. I will continue to advocate for South Lake Tahoe through my comrades and connections on the Western Slope. It is not easy, takes work and the Sierra divide is tough to overcome. I will work to have a close relationship with our newly elected board of supervisor.

**Is the city on the right course with restructuring debt and focusing on recreation? Why or why not?:** Yes, South Lake Tahoe's reliance on gaming and the jobs it provided has passed. We are prime to become a world-class recreation destination. We have not provided our visitors from around the globe with a city that projects that we are world class. Focusing on recreation and building an infrastructure that will complement and enhance the experience of every visitor

will contribute to our economic vitality. I am not an expert on the details of the restructuring of the city's debt, but I believe in the purpose and focus it brings.

**Name one vote the City Council made in the last four years you are proud of and one you are disappointed in – and why?:** I am proud that the City Council voted to create the Commons and to go ahead with the Harrison Avenue project. I am disappointed that after voting for the bag ban, a wise and environmentally progressive decision, that the council then, in opposition to their voted time line, voted to delay implementing the next stage of the ban.

**What is working in the city and what isn't; and how would you go about changing what isn't working?:** I believe the city is working when it takes a hard look at our future financially. I believe in strategic planning, timelines, community input for projects, collaboration and transparency. I am seeing all of this evolve and develop as the city moves forward.

I would not be running for City Council if I believed that the council is working at the highest level of collaboration, consensus building, visioning, respect for staff and administration, trust and cooperation between themselves and with the community and other agencies. I believe that every council does the best they can and brings the best they have to offer. I also believe that a new voice on the council will be beneficial to the city.

**Being on the council requires working with four others. Give readers an example of how you work well others in difficult situations with differing opinions:** I have had many difficult situations over the last 17 years on the board of education. I know that each interested person, staff member, resident, parent and student has a right to be heard and acknowledged. I respect the person and the right to comment and to disagree. I listen to each comment, rephrase and repeat it back and then acknowledge it. Some examples of dealing with difficult

decisions and differing opinions came when we were faced with closing two elementary schools, possibly cutting our athletic programs, creating K-2 schools and 3-5 grade schools, and changing to a 4x4 schedule at STHS. All of these difficult decisions had extensive comments and input. In all instances the public brought valuable input, in all instances the public input was taken seriously and in some instances, this input influenced the board to move in a different direction. A good council will bring a broad range of experience and knowledge to each discussion and decision in a respectful and professional manner.

**What is your opinion about the following topics:**

- **Ferry service on Lake Tahoe?:** Sounds great to me, less cars, less pollutants in the air, better experience for travelers. A good ferry service does need a higher water level and we need that too!
- **Loop road?:** I will need to study this further, but a highway going through our casino corridor has never made that much sense to me.
- **Future of Lake Tahoe Airport?:** It will not again be a commercial airport. Interstate 580 will soon be completed and the commute to the Reno/ Tahoe airport will be less than an hour. However, we will always need to have an accessible and open airport for our safety, in emergencies and for the appeal to private owners.
- **Increasing the transient occupancy tax?:** I need to study this proposal, looking at the cost to our visitors, the benefit to the city and how we would utilize the increased income. This would be a process; I imagine that would take study and input with our public and private partners.
- **Changing the vacation rental ordinance to reduce the number of such units in neighborhoods?:** We are a tourist destination. We have seen a drastic change in how our visitors want to

enjoy our beautiful surroundings on their vacation. I don't blame them. It is a far better experience for a family or friends to rent a home. Without data to support a compelling reason to change the ordinance, I would not be in favor. We do not own the neighborhood we live in, nor the sky or the mountains. If fortunate, we own one home in the neighborhood, sharing the rest of the neighborhood with others that wish they did as well. We are the lucky ones.

**Your background has been focused on social services, how will that translate to having to deal with a broader spectrum of issues on the council?:** I care deeply about children and families. I always have. Each of them is a thread in the fabric of our community. My knowledge of our families, nonprofit agencies, governmental agencies and my direct leadership, decision-making and networking will translate very well to the broader spectrum of issues. I will bring a perspective to the council that educates and recognizes the impact of our decisions in relationship to our residents. Our city is our community and I will constantly be aware that each decision we make can affect a person, a family, a business or an entity positively or negatively. I recognize and respect that many others know more than I about many of the broader issues at the beginning of my term. Each council member brings a vital perspective, mine will be that of vast board and organizational leadership, the ability to vision, execute and implement ideas and goals. I can speak of our most fragile residents and their housing, job and transportation challenges. I can also learn the issues, discuss the issues intelligently and thoughtfully, remembering that the impact is great, and often will follow for generations.

**Tell the voters something about yourself that they may not know:** Voters may not know that my husband and I came on vacation to South Lake Tahoe, as a stop on the way to the "perfect place" we would choose to live; at the time our thinking was that it might be Boulder, Colo. It was the end of



June and we spent all of July going to the beach, having barbecues, playing softball and baseball, watching the sunsets and enjoying our two young boys. At the end of July, we thought, why not here? A job was secured. Two more kids, seven grandkids and 41years later, it is still a vacation.