

Laine: Advocate for enforcing city's ordinances

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. This is the final one.*



Name: Brooke Laine

Profession/work experience: Bank manager, US Bank – January 2014 to current

Assistant sales and service manager, Bank of the West – December 2007-March 2013

President, Laine Photolabs Inc. – January 1990-October 2010.

Age: 50 years old

What organizations, committees or groups are you or have you been involved with?: Sports: South Tahoe National Little League, Babe Ruth, Pop Warner Football, The Quarterback Club, American Youth Soccer Organization.

Volunteer: South Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce, Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation, Clean Tahoe Program, South Tahoe High School Alumni Foundation.

Liaisons (past and present): Tahoe Transportation District, LAFCo, Solid Waste JPA, Clean Tahoe Program, California Tahoe

Conservancy, South Tahoe Public Utility District, Local Area Formation Committee.

Why are you running for City Council?: This community needs to continue heading down the positive path that we are currently on. Issues that can be resolved involving business, recreation and the environment will have my direct focus.

Why should people vote for you over the other candidates?: I am passionate. I am honest. I am focused. I get results.

What do you think is the most pressing issue facing South Lake Tahoe and how will you deal with it?: City unfunded health care is the elephant in the room. The City Council in partnership with our current employees and retired employees, are working hard to come to a positive resolution that will free this city from a financial burden so large that it cripples our ability to simply maintain our infrastructure let alone invest in new recreational opportunities.

If the city cannot reach an agreement with its bargaining units, are you willing to go to impasse? Why or why not?: I believe that the employees will resolve this matter under normal negotiations. The desire of our employees is as strong as the council's desire to reach a mutually agreed upon and beneficial solution. I would be willing to go to impasse if necessary because we are putting our best offer on the table. We have nothing to hide.

How would you resolve the CalPERS and health care issues in the city?: The public retirement system, known as CalPERS, needs revamping. The recent internal corruption may create an opportunity for the state of California to examine their "system" and makes some necessary changes. In the meantime, the city must remain fiscally prudent in securing the necessary retirement dollars needed so that our employees are secure. We will continue to chisel away at the health care issues as we continue to negotiate with our current labor force.

What is your opinion about term limits for the council?: Absolutely. There is value in having experience but there is also value in turnover. This position takes a minimum of two years just to get your arms around some of the issues and to gain a sense of how government works. I feel that two to three terms max is plenty. Then it is time to move on and share this opportunity with others in the community who want to leave things better than the way we found them.

If the city has positive cash flow, where should the money be spent?: Invest wisely! No "tax and spend". Infrastructure and sustainable business and recreation are vital.

What are your ideas for increasing the city's revenues?: Investing in our core product, recreation, will attract the families and individuals who appreciate the outdoors and want to experience Tahoe. The city will prosper as the business sector prospers.

What is your vision for the 56-acre project?: I was instrumental in advocating that the city purchase property in the industrial area at the Y. The purchase of this property now affords the opportunity to relocate our public works yard that is currently next to the campground. This move will free up valuable land that can now be used for additional improvements and added amenities to the campground that are articulated in the 56-acre project.

What would you do to improve relations with El Dorado County?: I currently represent the city by serving on the Local Area Formation Committee which meets in Placerville on a monthly basis. The composition of that board is multi-jurisdictional with representatives from the city of Placerville, the city of South Lake Tahoe, and representatives from the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors in addition to others. We work hard on that board to establish a good working relationship with all of the representatives. This has allowed me a base to build from.

Is the city on the right course with restructuring debt and focusing on recreation? Why or why not?: At this time, it appears the city is on the right course. We restructured our debt to take advantage of lower interest rates. The city's focus on recreation is right on.

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 of the council's decision to support the direction of the TRPA's – Regional Plan update which was an important, historical move toward returning power back to local government; giving back local control; and focusing on the larger issue for TRPA – as environmental governance and lake clarity. City government continues to improve with few disappointments at this time.

What is working in the city and what isn't; and how would you go about changing what isn't working?: The city of SLT has begun to view itself as a business.

What isn't working: Enforcement. Policies are in place, but we lack the political will and financial resources to enforce our own rules. Our sign, outdoor display, and vacation rental ordinances stand out as perfect examples of lack of enforcement. I will advocate for proactive enforcement of the city's ordinances and will support the necessary level of funding to make it happen.

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: There are two meetings a month. Every meeting is a mutual meeting of the minds in an effort to manage the city. Differences may arise and are heard and resolved with a vote. Everyone brings something to the table. Elected officials must respect the opinions expressed.

What is your opinion about the following topics:

- **Ferry service on Lake Tahoe?:** I have always liked this idea.

- **Loop road?:** Depends on the option.
- **Future of Lake Tahoe Airport?:** General aviation has my support. Current facilities need a facelift.
- **Increasing the transient occupancy tax?:** Not supportive. I see this as a short-term remedy to a long-term solution. Growing the economy has greater impact in the long term.
- **Changing the vacation rental ordinance to reduce the number of such units in neighborhoods?:** Support.

Some consider you a good ole girl – in a negative way. How do you address this criticism?: What a kudo to be called a “good ole South Lake Tahoe girl” at 50! I am the product of parents who owned a successful business. I was born at Barton, educated in the SLT school system and a graduate of the University of California, Santa Cruz with a degree in economics. This is my hometown. I married my husband, Jose here. We raised two children in Tahoe.

It’s my honor to serve this community as a “thank you” to all SLT has afforded me and our family.

Living and working here makes this good ole girl with fresh ideas work harder for our community.

Tell the voters something about yourself that they may not know: I love to hike and do so on a daily basis. My goal is to complete every mile of the Rim Trail.