

SLT nixes idea of rec center as homeless facility

By Kathryn Reed

The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center is off the table as a resource for the homeless to stay warm during the winter.

That was the direction the City Council took Tuesday after much discussion and a presentation by the **Tahoe Homeless Coalition**.

A group of individuals has come together to establish a warm room that would be open Nov. 1-April 30 between 8:30pm and 6:30am. It would be for adults without pets.

The coalition came to the council Sept. 1 with the goal of securing access to the rec center on select nights through the winter season for people to seek refuge from the cold. It would not be open every night, but only when the temperature was projected to reach a certain level.

Councilwoman Wendy David was the only member who wanted the rec center to be used in this manner. (Councilmember Tom Davis was absent until the afternoon **budget presentation**.) The other three believe there would be a conflict between users, didn't want people kicked out into the cold at dawn, and had other concerns.

All four, though, agreed there is a need for a warm room. They also support using a city facility if appropriate. Councilman Austin Sass even advocated for using taxpayer money to house the people in a \$20/night hotel when needed.

The council ultimately decided to appoint Councilmembers JoAnn Conner and David to a committee to work with the homeless coalition to find an answer.

Representatives from Temple Bat Yam and Unity at the Lake spoke of offering their facilities as a backup to the rec center, but had their own constraints for not being able to use their facilities on a regular basis.

In other action:

- The council voted to create a policy where money could be given to nonprofits on a case-by-case basis for economic development and political advocacy. Cash cannot be given to social organizations. The vote was 3-1, with Conner voting no.

- The council adopted a policy to decide who will be inducted into the Champions Plaza at Lakeview Commons. The Parks and Recreation Commission will be the panel making the decision based on the criteria and an application that must be submitted. Individual or team names will be etched on paving stones. Still to be determined is the funding source for the bricks.

- The idea of a key for the city was brought forward, but died for lack of desire to move forward.

- Sept. 19 is the city's 50th anniversary parade from Al Tahoe Boulevard to the Y. The two southbound lanes of Highway 50 will be used. Sept. 4 at 5pm is now the deadline to apply. There are more than 50 entities participating – including walking groups, floats and vehicles. The theme is Past, Present and Future.

- Nov. 11 is the city's gala at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel. The city is putting in \$15,000 to lower the cost to about \$65 per ticket. It's expected 250 people will attend. A book about the city's first 50 years is being created by Bona Fide Books in Meyers; cost is \$25.