

Ballot filling up for South Tahoe voters

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe City Council members on Tuesday made it official – there will be two tax issues and a question about the loop road on the Nov. 8 ballot.

Money collected from raising the hotel tax by 2 percentage points would be dedicated toward recreation upgrades.

The one-quarter sales tax hike would go to the General Fund. However, a secondary advisory question gives voters the opportunity to state their preference for where the money should go – to roads, housing or city facilities.

Councilwoman JoAnn Conner unsuccessfully lobbied for the choices to have a little more substance to them so voters would have a better understanding of what their choices mean. Councilman Austin Sass said the information in the voter pamphlet could provide the detail.

No matter what the voters pick, the council can do what it wants.

The other matter decided July 19 was to put the ballot measure regarding the loop road on the ballot. It was either that or adopt the petitioners' language as an ordinance. It was too late in the process to conduct a feasibility study; the third option per state law.

While some people at the meeting wanted to talk about the **lawsuit** filed last week by local resident Jason Collin to stop the loop road ballot measure, they were shutdown because it was not on the agenda and therefore could not legally be discussed.

Loop road opponents want voters to decide whether the council should be able to take action on the project without constituents first voting on a preferred alignment. Collin believes the measure is not valid as written and that it prevents the council from being able to do its job.

“I think the court will agree that the loop road ballot initiative should be stopped in its tracks because it is unconstitutionally vague, it potentially strips the council of its legal authority, and if allowed to stand, it steals attention, time and money away from the critical issues confronting our community,” Collin told *Lake Tahoe News*. “For the sake of the future of our community, I hope the court will act swiftly to eliminate this calculated move to deceive the voters. I felt compelled to step forward and challenge what I believe is an intentionally misleading and fundamentally flawed political effort that is trying to trick voters into believing something that simply isn’t true.”

Collin owns rental property on Pioneer Trail at Shepherds Drive. He said the only impact the loop road might bring to his holdings is the potential for more traffic.

“I have no financial interest in the outcome of this suit,” Collin told *LTN*.