

EDC taking its time addressing VHR concerns



Cherie Raffety, El Dorado County tax collector, talks VHRs on Nov. 1 in South Lake Tahoe.

By Kathryn Reed

If the intent was to waste 2½ hours of people's lives, the goal was accomplished.

If the intent was to educate people about the El Dorado County's policies on vacation home rentals, it was a poor attempt to do so because the only department represented at the Nov. 1 meeting was the tax collector.

If the intent was to find out what people want changed with the current policy, it was a haphazard approach that took more time than needed. Instead of allowing people to take three or five or some other arbitrary number of minutes to talk, county Treasurer-Tax Collector Cherie Raffety selected a topic and

had people speak to it. This meant the more than 70 attendees had to wait the entire time if they wanted to address each of their individual concerns.

And then Raffety, who is an elected official – not staff, ended the meeting before everyone had their say.

Many of these same people in October gave the Board of Supervisors their two cents when the electeds were in town for their annual Tahoe meeting. *Lake Tahoe News* was the lone local media outlet to cover that meeting.

It would have been more effective for Raffety to put out a survey with pointed questions as well as open ended ones to gather input. Plus, that approach would reach a greater number of people – including out of town VHR owners who can't attend a 2pm Wednesday meeting.

It was also perplexing since the elected officials are doing their own intel gathering. Raffety said the point of her meeting was to get info to bring to the supervisors for a potential ordinance revision.

El Dorado County first adopted its VHR ordinance in 2004.

Supervisors Sue Novasel and Michael Ranalli are the members of the board's ad hoc committee that is tasked with addressing the VHR issue throughout the county – not just the basin. While Tahoe is a problem, the Apple Hill area also has a great number of short-term rentals.

Those two have met with staff twice and plan to conduct public meetings in the future, though they may not occur until after the new year.

Novasel told *Lake Tahoe News* those meeting will include all appropriate departments “and anyone else we need to sit down with the public to have these discussions.”

At the meeting on Wednesday many of the complaints were the

same ones people in South Lake Tahoe have – trash, noise and parking. The frustrations are so great that some called for moratorium, much like the city is on a path to enact.

Most who spoke were against VHRs in residential neighborhoods, saying this is a commercial use of a home. Legally, though, that argument is not valid. Still, the county could ban these types of rentals if so desired.

While VHR and real estate industry reps were in the audience, they did more listening than talking.