

SnowGlobe tops residents' concerns at mayor's talk



South Lake Tahoe council members Brooke Laine and Wendy David, center, listen Feb. 21 to people's concerns. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

While the mayor wants a discussion, the people of South Lake Tahoe want answers. And those answers were not always forthcoming because usually it's staff who has them, not the electeds.

Resident William Dickert attended last week's gathering organized by Mayor Wendy David at the senior center. He told her that facts are what's needed and she ought to have the people there who can answer the questions.

Police Chief Brian Uhler and PIO Tracy Sheldon were in the back scrambling to text/email other staff for the answers. Some they got, other questions went unanswered.

This was somewhat of the same frustration at David's **inaugural gathering** in January. Lots of questions, few answers.

This is in part because South Lake Tahoe has a city manager-

led government, not a strong mayor form of leadership. It means the electeds, while they are in office to set policy, seldom actually retain the minutia of detail staff does. This is because it is staff who is doing the work and is intimately familiar with what is going on. These sessions are often done in election years, such as this. David's term is about to expire.

SnowGlobe dominated much of the conversation, with many complaining about the noise, and believing the economy at New Year's would be just fine without the three-day music festival.

Dickert, though, pointed out that with SnowGlobe and anything the city is involved with has trade-offs. Eliminating a revenue source means having to get rid of an expense. That line item could be public safety personnel or snow removal or something of importance to people.

Scott Blasser, president of the South Lake Tahoe Firefighters Association, spoke of how SnowGlobe is an improvement for first responders compared to the chaos at Stateline in years past.

"Yes, it's a drug event. All concerts are. It's on the safer end," Blasser said. "The drugs being used there don't kill people unless it's egregious. It's not like heroin."

Councilwoman Brooke Laine was David's guest at the conversation. They both said the damage to the field is not acceptable.

Blasser assured those with concerns about the fireworks that the fire chief would not let them be shot off if there were a threat to a forest fire.