

# South Lake Tahoe pot rules blowing in the wind

By Kathryn Reed

Marijuana – it seems to be the high point of so many South Lake Tahoe City Council meetings. Tuesday shouldn't be any different.

The morning will start with the electeds meeting in closed session to discuss the lawsuit with Tahoe Wellness Collective. Last month there was no reportable action when it was on the agenda.

At issue is the medical marijuana dispensary's permit to operate. By court order it is able to. If owner Cody Bass buys the building at the Bijou Center, that could make the issue go away. There is no hearing date for the writ.

Since the first of the year Bass has had trouble stocking the shelves with medicine based on how the state changed its regulations and the city saying TWC is not operating with a valid permit. Multiple patients last month gave the council an earful about how what seems to be a personal vendetta against Bass is hurting local residents.

But **Bass changed his designation** with the state, which has prevented him from being able to get product. Much of the disruption in his business is his own doing despite his desire to place blame on the city.

The next closest dispensary is in **Incline Village**.

At the Jan. 23 meeting the council extended the urgency moratorium on recreational marijuana. The original 45-day urgency ordinance was OK'd Dec. 12. Last month it was extended by 10 months and 15 days, as the law allows. It is possible

for the council to revoke the ordinance before then, likely replacing it with rules to allow recreational marijuana and more medical dispensaries.

There was consensus at that meeting to bring back an amendment on Feb. 6 that would allow development agreements to go forward. However, it's not a done deal until a vote is taken. Councilman Austin Sass was the force behind this, with Councilman Tom Davis saying he was against it.

Development agreements could allow entities to open a pot shop before an ordinance is in place. It's also possible they would have to alter their business practices to comply with any ordinance that might be forthcoming.

On the Feb. 6 agenda is the urgency ordinance, not just an amendment. The change has to do with the development agreement.

Interim City Attorney Nira Doherty, who calls herself an expert in California cannabis law, refused to answer *Lake Tahoe News'* questions.

Those questions included:

- Why does the urgency ordinance for pot look like it's coming back as the whole ordinance and not just an amendment as was discussed at the last council meeting?
- If it's all new, what is new? How does this affect the time line?
- Is this even legal?

Davis along with Councilwoman Brooke Laine have been working with a 15-member group of community members to come up with a framework for a recreational marijuana ordinance. Their last meeting was last month.

This Cannabis Subcommittee at Tuesday's council meeting will

update the rest of the council about its work. It will be informational only, with no vote to be taken. Future public workshops and action will be scheduled.