

North Tahoe Citizen Action Alliance

PO Box 289, Tahoe Vista, CA 96148

Office: 530-546-8125

www.ntcaa.org

Jerry Wotel, Temporary Newsletter Editor

NTCAA Newsletter - May 2008

Our Geo Tourism meeting was great. Jacquie Chandler, Geo Tahoe Coordinator, spoke on: 1) Geo Tourism: what it is...why it is, 2) Where we score Tahoe based on the 12 Geo Tourism principles developed by National Geographic, 3) Geo Tahoe: proposal, projects and updates, and 4) Audience input on assets: current and desired commitments/feedback. Art George of the Washoe People also spoke on his People's new Declaration of Sacred Estate Held in the Land that includes the Tahoe Basin. In the Geo Tourism test for Tahoe taken by the audience, no one gave a grade higher than a "D" for Lake Tahoe. That is something to be concerned about.

Our next community meeting will be on Fire Prevention on Monday, June 9; at the Tahoe City PUD Board Room, 221 Fairway Drive, at 6 pm. Guest speakers will be Fire Chief Duane Whitelaw, North Tahoe Fire Protection District, and Mr. Coe Swobe of the TRPA Governing Board. This is a must attend meeting to garner information to protect your life and property from the devastation of another fire, in what is predicted to be another very dry summer and fall. You will also learn about the near \$1 million available to Tahoe home owners to assist in creating defensible space around their home.



Lake Tahoe Issues

After two decades of debate, the TRPA agreed on new rules that will govern Lake Tahoe's shore zone over the next 20 years. These new ordinances, which could be adopted as early as June, primarily deal with construction of new piers, buoys, ramps, floating docks and slips, most of which will be private.

Under TRPA's "preferred alternative," which would replace the previous 2006 "alternative 6A," 128 piers would be added to the existing 768 piers and a whopping 1862 additional buoys would be added to the current 4454 buoys, for a total of 6316. Since TRPA estimates one-third to one-half (1485 to 2227) of existing buoys are unauthorized, unless these are permitted as part of the allocation, this would be an additional allocation of up to 4089 beyond what is currently authorized? Any additional buoy approvals should be delayed until the illegal buoys have been identified and removed, or become part of the authorization.

Issues dealing with the detrimental effects of this alternative and the resulting increase in boating, pollution, noise, water quality and scenery degradation, coupled with inadequately addressed mitigation, enforcement and safety measures are of great concern. We strongly urge you to attend the crucial TRPA shore zone workshop on **May 22nd, 9am to 4pm at TRPA's Stateline, NV office.** This could be our last chance to make our voices heard.

Regional Plan Update

TRPA is moving quickly to modify the existing 1987 Regional Plan to guide development for the next 20 years. Their staff, led by John Singlaub, TRPA Executive Director, has been making the case for targeting allocations of commercial floor area (CFA) and tourist accommodation units (TAU's) for individual projects that follow the model of "mixed-use, high density, compact development." No longer will the Community Plans be given any allocations. These were the criteria for the CEP's as demonstration projects, and they want to extend that model for the New Regional Plan. The staff claims that the Environmental Improvements they will require of these large projects will be a "net gain" for Lake Tahoe and move TRPA closer to achieving the environmental thresholds. However, how will a small property owner be able to redevelop their property? How will the water quality gains offset the environmental damage caused by increase in traffic and affordable housing demand due to the increase in densities?

These, and many more questions, have not been answered since the whole focus is on promoting large projects that follow the Sierra Business Council growth model. John Singlaub is on the Board of Directors for Sierra Business Council.

While this model may be more appropriate for South Lake Tahoe, the applicability to North Shore's unique topography and existing infrastructure is questionable. We already have "transit oriented" commercial areas within a block of S.R.28, and already have the most walk able residential area in Kings Beach. Tahoe Vista has no "urban core" yet has a great need for redevelopment. The direction TRPA staff is headed only promises another layer of regulation over the existing one that favors very large projects and ignores the needs and contributions of small projects. More to come in the next newsletter.



Community Enhancement Program

Four projects have now submitted their applications to the TRPA under this program, Homewood Mountain Resort - Homewood, Boulder Bay LLC - Crystal Bay, Domus Affordable Housing - Kings Beach, and BB LLC - Kings Beach Town Center. Boulder Bay has been determined to require an Environmental Impact Statement, and Domus and Homewood are still in 30-day review. The applications are only available at the TRPA offices. (See Newsletter Vol. 1 Issue 5 for award reservation details.)

Redevelopment Agency

Placer County Redevelopment Agency continues to collect our property taxes (nearly \$6 million this fiscal year) and stockpiling cash (\$24 million). They are spending about \$1 million per year in administrative expenses with very few in-the-ground improvements. There is still no local area committee to prioritize and oversee spending especially in the Kings Beach/Tahoe Vista area where 70% of the North Tahoe tax revenue is generated. We continue to monitor their activities and request local input, but the current regime in Auburn wants to tightly control the funds for what they see as their desired projects.

Kings Beach

The Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project for downtown Kings Beach is progressing with one major change. Instead of Placer County hearing the final EIR and alternative recommendations first, the TRPA has now tentatively scheduled a public hearing on the issue for June 26th at the Chateau in Incline Village. Since TRPA's responsibilities are broader than Placer County's jurisdiction it makes sense for the preferred alternative choice and the final EIS to be approved by TRPA's Governing Board first. This may save Placer County from a protracted and embarrassing public battle.

Tahoe Vista

The Redevelopment Agency has responded to our letter requesting community improvements to Tahoe Vista. I would like to be up-beat, but the basic context of the response was not favorable to our requests. Other than erosion control improvements already planned for 2008, reasons for not going beyond that were that other organizations (NTPUD, utility companies, etc.) must take the lead, or "Currently the waiting list for high priority public improvement activities far exceed the funds available to construct them." (See Redevelopment Agency discussion above) We suggested partnering with other organizations to make needed accomplishments as a solution. But it seems that Placer County has decided they know what is best for us, so keep those tax checks coming.



The Tahoe Sands EIR/EIS contracts have not yet been signed by the TRPA, therefore once they are, 12-18 months will be required for their completion and public review.

Crystal Bay

Boulder Bay (BB) Application for the Abandonment/Variance of Reservoir and Wassou roads passed four to two at the Washoe County Planning Commission Hearing without having a project application. The only condition for approval is a new traffic report evaluating the project.

BB and Washoe County Staff have stated that the Abandonment and Variance Requests are motivated by the desire to assure BB that the "money they spend . . . could result in an actual project." Therefore, the recommendation for approval ignored anticipated changes in traffic volume and patterns, ignoring the extent to which structures (with heights to 86 ft) will cast shadows and prevent surface melt on steepened roadways, and ignoring the consequences of eliminating an access point to S.R.28 as an evacuation route, even in light of greatly increased use density.

A controversial issue is how traffic is reduced with the construction of BB, as is being claimed by the developer and his traffic consultant. Reducing the casino by two-thirds is given as a major contributor to traffic reduction. However, if you visit the casino for gaming or dining, most every day of the week, about two-thirds of the gaming machines are not being utilized. So removing those machines has no effect on number of visitors or traffic. The expanded resort facilities will result in increased traffic. Common sense negates the traffic reduction claim.

Upcoming Events/Key Date

Agendas for TRPA Governing Board and APC, and also Placer BOS are not available until a few days before the meeting. Therefore, it is difficult to provide a meaningful emphasis to the meeting. Attendance at events shown in bold type is encouraged. Other meetings/events not shown here will be announced by email.

Wednesday, May 21	NTFPD Board Meeting	6 pm, TCPUB Board Room
Wednesday, May 28	TRPA Governing Board	9:30 am, Chateau, Incline Village
Thursday, May 29	Bruce Kranz Coffee	9 am, Gar Woods Restaurant
Tuesday, June 3	VOTE	
Wednesday, June 4	NLTRA Board Meeting	8:30 am, TCPUD Board Room
Monday, June 9	NTCAA Fire Prevention Duane Whitelaw, Fire Chief & Coe Swobe, TRPA Gov. Board	6 pm, TCPUD Board Room
Tuesday, June 10	NTPUD Board Meeting	3 pm, NTCC Kings Beach
Wednesday, June 11	TRPA APC Meeting	9:30 am, Chateau Incline Village
Thursday, June 12	NTRAC Meeting	6 pm, TCPUD Board Room
Wednesday, June 18	NTFPD Board Meeting	6 pm, TCPUD Board Room
Friday, June 20	TCPUD Board Meeting	8:30 am, TCPUD Board Room
Wednesday, June 25	TRPA Governing Board	9:30 am, TRPA Offices Stateline
Thursday, June 26 (Tentative)	TRPA Governing Board KBCCIP Public Workshop	(Watch for announcement)

TRPA – Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
 NLTRA – North Lake Tahoe Resort Association
 TCPUD – Tahoe City Public Utility District
 NTCC – North Tahoe Conference Center

APC – Advisory Planning Commission
 NTPUD – North Tahoe Public Utility District
 NTFPD – North Tahoe Fire Protection District
 NTRAC- North Tahoe Regional Advisory Committee