

SPECIAL COMBINED BOARD MEETING
OF
TAHOE CITY PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT
AND
NORTH LAKE TAHOE RESORT ASSOCIATION
APPROVED MINUTES

October 17, 2011

DIRECTORS PRESENT TCPUD: President Ron Treabess, Vice President Lou Reinkens
Directors Erik Henrikson, Judy Friedman and Dan Wilkins

NLTRA: President Ron McIntyre
Directors Ron Parson, Alex Mourelatos, Wally Auerbach
And Jennifer Merchant

TCPUD STAFF PRESENT: Cindy Gustafson, General Manager
Jim Dykstra, Director of Accounting & Employee Services/Treasurer
Ramona Cruz, Incoming - Director of Accounting & Employee
Services/Treasurer
Bob Bolton, Director of Parks and Recreation
Kelli Twomey, Director of Resource Development
Terri Viehmann, District Clerk

NLTRA STAFF PRESENT: Sandy Evans Hall, CEO/Executive Director
Kym Fabel, Chamber Manager
Andy Chapman, Director of Tourism
Jeremy Jacobson, Leisure Sales Manager

A. CALL TO ORDER

Judy Friedman, Director for the Tahoe City Public Utility District called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

B. PUBLIC FORUM

There was no public comment.

C. Public Workshop and Presentation of Alternatives for the West Commons (Current Fire Station) Site

NLTRA Board President Ron McIntyre and TCPUD Director Judy Friedman opened the joint Board meeting by introducing the Board members in attendance from each organization. The purpose of this meeting is to present options for West Commons and to gather community input. Placer County District Five Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery and Patrick Wright of the California Tahoe Conservancy were welcomed. The meeting was turned over to Ms. Gustafson, General Manager of the Tahoe City Public Utility District and Ms. Evans Hall, CEO/Executive Director of the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association.

Ms. Gustafson stated that we have an exciting opportunity with the move of the Fire District from their existing building to their new location. This is a unique opportunity for our community because it is one of very few properties owned by Placer County that is already developed for public use. A partnership of various agencies and groups was organized to provide history and background on Tahoe City, and they developed guiding principles to help direct the design consultants in developing options for the site. The steering committee was introduced.

NLTRA, TCPUD, and Placer County funded the study and consultant design work and Granlibakken donated lodging. Ms. Gustafson noted that one of the requirements of funding for the original Commons Beach plan was to create ADA access from the road to the beach. This has not been implemented at this time.

Ms. Evans Hall commented that helping develop West Commons fits with the overall strategic goals of the NLTRA. They are looking for ways to increase opportunities for visitors, as well as increasing environmental education of our area. Indoor recreation activities are needed to invigorate Tahoe City.

Ms. Gustafson noted that the TCPUD has some challenges with the Tahoe Community Center (TCC) building. The TCC is not currently self sustaining and TCPUD incurs extensive costs to maintain the Community Center. It's taking more and more money to keep it up. The other challenge is how we deal with ADA accessibility to the upstairs at the TCC. Ms. Gustafson stressed the need to find a solution to this issue. Also, there is a deficit at Commons Beach. The PUD receives around \$52k from Placer County to maintain Commons Beach, but the maintenance cost for the park is \$132k. The PUD needs to look at ways to offset costs. One of our goals in this process was to look at a possible concession at west commons to offset the costs.

The steering committee members:

Ray Lacey, California Tahoe Conservancy	Mark Rideout, Placer County
Don Hale, North Tahoe Fire Protection District	Cindy Gustafson, TCPUD
Bob Bolton, TCPUD	Kelli Twomey, TCPUD
Judy Friedman, TCPUD	Sandy Evans Hall, North Lake Tahoe Resort Assoc.
Ron Treabess, North Lake Tahoe Resort Assoc.	Ron Parson, North Lake Tahoe Resort Assoc.
Lolly Kupec, Tahoe City Downtown Assoc.	Brendan Madigan, Tahoe City Downtown Assoc.
Christin Hanna, Tahoe City Downtown Assoc.	Marguerite Sprague, North Lake Tahoe Historical Society
Jackie King, U.S. Forest Service	Randy Pomin, North Lake Tahoe Historical Society
Susan Grove, California State Parks	James Lobue, Placer County Redevelopment Agency
Steve Teshara, Sustainable Community Advocates	

The team of consultants were introduced: Steve Bowers and Bill Bruner of Spencer Associates Architecture, Dick Glanville of Glanville Associates (designer of Commons Beach), and Barry Howard of Barry Howard Limited.

The consultants presented a slide show containing four potential options for the existing fire station location.

1. Fountain of the Lake - projected construction cost range of \$4-6 million
2. Community Center Plus - projected construction cost range of \$7-8 million
3. The Tahoe Experience Themes - projected construction cost range of \$11-13 million
4. The Hydrarium - projected construction cost range of \$23-25 million

The session was opened for questions and comments from the audience.

What is the strategy for offsite parking or a shuttle strategy? It does not appear from the presentations that this has been addressed. I assume that if shuttle services would be used it would come from the Transit Center?

Do all options have a plan for restrooms and ADA access?

The answer is yes.

Does the scope of work include operating costs?

No, because the consultant's contract was limited in scope. The consultants have provided contacts that could provide operating costs.

It would be a disaster not to create a self-sustaining structure. The firehouse was built in 1961. It was agreed to allow the Fire District to use the public property (the property belonging to the people of Tahoe City) and when they move they are required to tear the building down. It seems the main reason to tear it down is to open up the view. There is plenty of office space and buildings available downtown that do require taxpayer funding. It would be terrible to build something in conflict with local businesses.

It was noted that tearing down the Fire Station will not open up lake views. The condos behind the station block any view of the lake.

We don't want anything to be in conflict with the businesses in town.

Are the proposed interpretive centers mechanical or human?

All would include both components. The goal is to augment personal interaction and develop something that attracts younger generations.

It is a registered local landmark and I believe it would not be able to be moved. I would hate to lose the art center.

Marguerite Sprague of the North Lake Tahoe Historical Society clarified that the building has an honorary historic building designation only. Changes to the building would have to go through the CEQA process, but there are no hard and fast rules regarding relocation or changes to the building.

Please expand on the demand for a Community Center Plus interpretive center. How do we view the potential demand? What could be the potential revenue?

The current TCC (Tahoe Community Center) structure is constraining. We are not proposing to move the function of the building, just the existing structure. We are proposing to increase the function of the structure and add ADA access.

Would the \$24 million option offer more opportunities than the \$7 million option?

There is not enough data at this point. We must first have a plan to present to potential funding sponsors. Private and non-profit ventures are really the only option to gain long term sustainability. Case studies have been done. There are examples of many communities that have gotten behind visitors centers. The visitor center at Hoover Dam has been a tremendous success. We provided data on other communities that have been bold with their visions, such as the visitor center at Hoover Dam, Coyote Point Museum for Environmental Education, Bay Area Discovery Museum and Fort Baker. We focused on a community amenity rather than a visitor attraction.

Did you consider input from the younger generation?

Yes, this was an important consideration during the process. Two of the committee members are from the younger generation.

Are we focusing on visitors only or was the community considered?

Kelli Twomey, TCPUD and steering committee member, reiterated that the community was a big focus for the options. The ideas were not based on visitors. We currently have a great asset with Commons Beach. The goal is to enhance what has been developed. A few other projects were benchmarked. One of the projects was the Coyote Point kid's museum. They completely revamped their operation and changed their name to Curi-odyssey. They have now become an attraction for locals and visitors. It is educational and entertaining. Another challenge for Tahoe City is to create an option that is not weather dependent. We want to draw locals and tourists.

Ron McIntyre commented that if we have to build at all we need to build so we can see the lake. The lake is only visible from the second floor of the existing Fire Station.

When looking at alternatives, was it considered to replace only the Fire Station and leave an open area where the Tahoe Community Center is located?

As the steering committee, how do we address this process going forward? We want all groups to help formulate a plan. The committee decided to come up with a level of alternatives to spur thought in our community. The four options were designed to give a framework for discussion.

One in every five years it is too shallow to paddle or kayak at Commons Beach. Was there any consideration in the options to plan for dredging of the beach area?

The consultants responded that none of the options were explored in detail. They are concepts at this point.

A larger community conference space would benefit the town. There is no infrastructure or premium lodging in town. A premium site would allow Tahoe City to host more than with current accommodations.

The site is very limited unless you go vertical.

It was clarified that the TCPUD is not looking to be lead agency in this project. TCPUD has spearheaded the first step. A plan needs to be developed to move forward and to be able to secure funding. The NLTRA or Placer County may end up as the lead agencies.

Placer County Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery commented that she had not heard a single request to keep the building. One suggestion is to demo the building, put in a low maintenance park and allow time for the community to raise the money needed for a new structure.

A few comments from steering committee members: There is no view from the location. Government funding is drying up. We must be more creative in all funding options, private vs. public. We would like to create a gathering spot for the community. At this time we have no compelling reasons to keep families in our area. If we cannot keep families in town, the local businesses will die. I encourage everyone to be open-minded, challenge yourself to see a new future.

Don Hale of North Tahoe Fire Protection District stated that when the Station moves they are required to tear it down. The new building will be occupied in December 2011. It will take up to three months to completely vacate the old site. The existing station will then need to be moth-balled. At this time there is not a date to remove the structure.

Tearing the building down and then waiting to develop a plan will allow complacency to creep in. Once it is removed, there will be a lack of energy to create something new.

Ray Lacey of the California Tahoe Conservancy commented that the Commons Beach Plan always included West Commons. Based on the funding received Tahoe City is obligated to complete this section and include ADA access. At this time the town is not in compliance. Other case studies have shown that a remarkable visitor's center can create a much better appreciation of our lake and the sensitive environment that supports it.

I would like to see a place that will draw visitors and families with small children. We need a place to go when the weather is bad.

Parking is always a challenge in town.

The entire presentation will be posted to the TCPUD website. The audience and community are encouraged to review the presentation and share their input on the questionnaire. Questions or comments can be submitted to Kelli Twomey at the TCPUD.

D. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Ron Treabess, President

Terri Viehmann, District Clerk

Prepared by Terri Viehmann