

EDC faces lawsuit over Dollar General store

By Lake Tahoe News

The Georgetown Preservation Society is challenging El Dorado County Board of Supervisors' approval of the construction of a 9,100-square-foot Dollar General store.

Attorney Donald Mooney of Davis, who is representing the West Slope organization, said his client has exhausted all other administrative remedies.

The court documents, which were filed May 6, allege that the county failed to adequately analyze the project's environmental impacts or provide mitigation measures that would reduce such impacts to less than significant.

The writ says, "Respondents abused their discretion and failed to proceed according to law in that they failed to require the preparation of an environmental impact report for the project, despite the existence of a 'fair argument' based on substantial evidence in the record, that the project may have a significant effect on the environment."

Impacts outlined in the writ include those to wetlands and biological resources, traffic and circulation, geology and soils, water resources and water quality, and aesthetics. Another impact, not specifically mentioned in the writ, but one evident throughout the entire process was the strong feeling of many area residents that a massive Dollar General store did not belong in the historic downtown of this former mining community. Dollar General revised the building design a number of times, but residents remained largely unconvinced that it fit the county's Historic Design Guidelines which say new buildings in historic county areas like Georgetown must reflect the type of architecture typical of California's Gold

Rush period.

At the April 5 Board of Supervisors meeting Georgetown-area residents pleaded with the board to not make a decision that would forever alter the character of their home. Before the vote, Supervisor Shiva Frentzen commented, “I don’t see a single person here to support this including the Divide chamber ... there are some areas where you need to honor the locals.”

This lawsuit now enters a growing stream of land use-based lawsuits filed by local residents against the board’s planning decisions.

The writ names the county, supervisors, Simon CRE Abbie LLC, and Denton and Carolyn Beam. Simon CRE Abbie is a commercial real estate company and the project applicant on behalf of Dollar General. The Beams are the current property owners of the three Main Street parcels.

Dollar General is a nationwide chain of box stores that offer a range of lower-priced merchandise and groceries.

EDC judicial race a heated political battle



Roland Tiemann, left, and Nelson Brooks are battling to be El Dorado County Superior Court judge.

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County's lone contested judicial race on the June 7 ballot is turning ugly, with the challenger accusing the incumbent of misleading the public about political contributions.

Ashlee Titus, an attorney with a law firm out of Sacramento, on May 10 filed a complaint with the Fair Political Practices Commission on behalf of Roland Tiemann who wants to unseat Nelson Brooks. The document alleges Brooks did not file the proper financial paper work in a timely manner.

"Mr. Tiemann is grasping at straws because he is behind in the campaign," El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Brooks told *Lake Tahoe News*. "There is no truth to any of the allegations."

District Attorney Vern Pierson told *Lake Tahoe News*, "It appears to be a pathetic attempt to resurrect a failing campaign."

When told about the FPPC complaint by *LTN* on May 12, Brooks spent that night reviewing his paperwork with his campaign treasurer who is a certified public accountant. Brooks said a document might have been filed a couple days late, to which he would not be surprised if he were fined. That would be the normal protocol.

Brent Lowder, a political consultant acting as Tiemann's spokesman, told *Lake Tahoe News*, voters should be concerned with "how sloppy they have been with their filings."

Lowder went on to say, "Someone running to be or continuing to be county judge should be expected to follow the law if they expect county voters to support them to enforce the law."

Most of Brooks' campaign has been self-financed – to the tune of \$300,000 from he and his wife. Small contributions add up to less than \$15,000.

It can be a big deal if contributors' names come out after votes are cast because some voters are swayed – more often away from a candidate – if a controversial donor surfaces. Early voting started May 9 in El Dorado County and vote-by-mail ballots were sent this week.

Asked why he believes Tiemann is running, Brooks said, "I think he has been put up to it by a judge who wants to be presiding judge and he knows he doesn't have the votes for that with the current makeup of the bench. He wants to pack the court."

The judge Brooks is referencing is Steve Bailey. Bailey has made it clear he wants to replace Judge Suzanne Kingsbury as the presiding judge.

The El Dorado County bench is a bit divided among those who support each candidate. On Brooks' side are Kingsbury, Kenneth Melikian, Vicki Ashworth, and Jim Wagoner. Supporting Tiemann are Dylan Sullivan and Warren Stracener.

Sullivan, who was endorsed by Kingsbury when she ran a couple years ago, lost her original assignment last summer. Kingsbury made that decision. There has been a rift between the two since then.

Neither Sullivan nor Bailey could be reached for comment.

Brooks was first appointed to the bench in 2009 by then Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. He won the current six-year term a year later. Prior to that he had been an attorney for more than 25 years.

Tiemann has been an attorney for 10 years, the minimum required to be a judge in California.

Tiemann has appeared before Brooks a few times. Since the campaign started the judge has recused himself.

Opinion: Importance of bike safety on the roads

By Fran Clader

May is National Bike Safety Month, and the California Highway Patrol is reminding motorists and bicyclists to share responsibility for roadway safety.

California's weather allows bicyclists to enjoy riding many months throughout the year.

Although bicycle safety should be practiced every day, the month of May has been set aside to draw awareness to how we can all help minimize bicycle injuries and deaths.

“As important as it is for drivers to be mindful of bicyclists, those who ride their bicycles, must exercise safe practices and ride smart,” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. “With all roadway users doing their part, we can help reduce the number of tragedies.”

According to 2014 statistics from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, each year about 2 percent of collision victims are bicyclists. In a majority of the bicycle deaths, the most serious injuries are to the head, highlighting the importance of wearing a bicycle helmet. Helmet use has been estimated to reduce the odds of head injury by 50 percent. Bicyclists and motorists should be especially aware that a large portion of collisions that result in death occur in the late afternoon or evening. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that 48 percent of bicyclist deaths occurred between 4pm and midnight.

Bicyclists on the roadway have all the rights and responsibilities of a vehicle driver and are responsible for complying with the law. Riders must also obey the laws of the road, such as stopping at stop signs and stop lights, and yielding to pedestrians. Riders can increase their safety by wearing reflective clothing, wearing a helmet, watching for parked cars, staying alert at all times, looking before turning, and riding with the flow of traffic.

In recent years, California has implemented traffic safety laws to help improve conditions on the road for both bicyclists and motorists. The Three Feet for Safety Act became operative on Sept. 16, 2014, and requires motorists to allow at least three feet of clearance when passing a bicyclist. Also, effective Jan. 1, 2016, the slow-moving vehicle statute was clarified to require any vehicle, including bicyclists, proceeding upon a highway at a speed less than the normal speed of traffic, to pull off the roadway if it has five or more vehicles lined up behind it.

Motorists need to be aware of bicyclists on the roadways and take certain precautions when sharing the road. Drivers should follow a few safety tips to help reduce bicycle-involved collisions, such as: slow down, be patient, share the road, look twice for bicyclists, and expect bicyclists on the roadway.

Data from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System shows that in 2013 there were 164 bicyclists killed in collisions statewide, which represents an 11.5 percent increase from the previous year. Since 2013, the number of bicyclists killed in collisions has dropped each year. In 2015, there were 133 bicyclists killed in collisions statewide. This represents a 23 percent decrease from 2013.

Although the number of bicyclists killed has declined recently, there are still too many fatal collisions occurring throughout the state. There is work to be done on the part of both bicyclists and motorists.

“With the monthlong promotion of bicycle safety awareness

throughout the state, we hope to see the number of incidents involving bicyclists continue to decline,” added Farrow. “Through education, mutual respect, and observance of traffic laws we can help make the roadways a safer place for all.”

The mission of the CHP is to provide the highest level of Safety, Service, and Security to the people of California.

Fran Clader works for the California Highway Patrol.

Survey: Teens addicted to mobile devices

By Sharon Noguchi, San Jose Mercury News

Just how badly are we addicted to our mobile devices?

It may be even worse than we admit, according to a survey by children’s advocacy group Common Sense Media. The San Francisco-based organization bills the study released Tuesday as the first to explore parents’ and teens’ growing dependence on the tech gadgets that are supposed to empower us.

Nearly 59 percent of parents think their teens are addicted to their cellphones, tablets or laptops – 50 percent of teens agree – and 27 percent of parents believe they themselves are addicted. The survey polled 620 parents and 620 teens.

Read the whole story

Bay Area political candidate apologizes for Dugard mailer

By Sam Richards, Bay Area News Group

CONCORD – Assembly candidate Tim Grayson has apologized for a campaign mailer sent to some households in Contra Costa and Solano counties touting his contact with kidnapping victim Jaycee Lee Dugard after her long time in captivity, without first consulting with Dugard's family or nonprofit foundation.

Nancy Seltzer, a spokeswoman for the JAYC Foundation Inc., which helps families that have gone through abductions and related traumas, said Grayson apologized to Dugard and to the foundation on Monday and immediately removed Jaycee-related material from his campaign website, as was requested.

Grayson, a Concord city councilman, said late Tuesday that "in no way would I want to do anything that would be a problem for the Dugard family."

Dugard, now 36, was abducted from Meyers in June 1991, when she was 11 years old, by Phillip Garrido, a known sex offender, and his wife, Nancy Garrido. Dugard was kept at the Garridos' unincorporated Antioch property until 2009, when she was found in the company of the Garridos.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Lake Tahoe Bike Challenge runs May 14-June 14. For more info, go **online**.
- Emily Buntin has been selected as the Carson Valley Adult Day Club program director and is working with local and state agencies to license the program.
- The Nevada Highway Patrol from May 16-June 1 will be looking for motorists and occupants who are not buckled up while traveling. During this time, officers will be looking for drivers and other occupants in vehicles who are not wearing their seat belts and/or children who are not properly in car or booster seat.
- Barton Health is offering the Freedom From Smoking cessation program from the American Lung Association from June 1-July 13, 6:30-8:30pm in South Lake Tahoe. Cost is \$30. Sign up **online** under Addiction Resources. For more information, call 530.543.5549 or email fit@bartonhealth.org.
- Mya Rossi has been awarded the honorary role of Youth of the Year of the Boys and Girls Club of Lake Tahoe.

Calif.'s shoddy roads won't get fixed any time soon

By Liam Dillon, Los Angeles Times

Over the last few months, Gov. Jerry Brown and legislators have reached major deals to increase taxes on healthcare plans and boost the state's minimum wage. But as Brown prepares to

release his revised budget on Friday, one big issue appears to be far from a resolution: California's shoddy roads.

Brown, Assemblyman Jim Frazier, D-Oakley, and state Sen. James Beall Jr., D-San Jose, have all pitched plans to chip away at the more than \$130-billion backlog in state and local road repairs, plus the billions more in annual transportation budget deficits. The plans emerged after Brown called a special session last summer to focus legislators' attention on the dire problem.

All three proposals rely on hiking up the state's beleaguered gas and diesel taxes along with levying new annual fees on car owners. These revenue increases require the support of two-thirds of the Legislature, including the backing of traditionally tax-averse GOP lawmakers.

Read the whole story

STHS challenging accreditation report

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Unified School District officials are scratching their heads when it comes South Tahoe High School being put on a two-year probation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

The school board on May 10 received notification from STHS Principal Chad Houck. Houck got word from the WASC in late April and has already started the appeals process, which is likely to take a year.

"We believe the information WASC used was incorrect because of errors, bias or lack of evidence," Houck told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The school's accreditation is not threatened, Houck said. (Accreditation is good for six years.)

No one from WASC returned a call.

"It is big deal. When something like this happens it's important we take it very seriously," Houck said. "It definitely caught us off-guard."

The only way to find out what led to the probationary status is to appeal the decision. Even though that process is under way, with the district challenging WASC on three out of four possible criteria, no word has come back from the Burlingame-based organization.

Accreditation starts with the school's doing a self-analysis. This go-round more technology was involved, which allowed more staff participation. It's about creating a plan for improvement. Action is already occurring, with the board on Tuesday approving additions for Common Core.

A WASC team made up of educators from throughout the state is assembled to help with the process and make recommendations.

That, in large part, is where things broke down, according to Houck. He said meetings were canceled, and that the committee never met with Superintendent Jim Tarwater. LTUSD also contends there was bias by one or more members of the team who came to visit, and that the evidence given the evaluation team was not complete.

When the committee left, Houck said, there was no indication the areas for improvement weren't routine and already being addressed.

"In our report we had an action plan. We have an action plan to address those areas of growth. We already know how to get

better,” Houck said.

Fundraiser to benefit Donner State Park

Sierra State Parks Foundation will host the second annual fundraising gala A Night at the Museum: Celebrating the Pioneer Experience on June 4.

This “country elegant” evening will kick off the fundraising efforts to restore the 98-year-old Donner Pioneer Monument. Starting at 6pm there will be live music, costumed period actors, unique food, and the not-no-silent auction.

Tickets are \$150. Seating at the Donner museum is limited and reservations are required. Tickets can be purchased **online**.

Dinner is at 7pm, followed by the auction.

3-D printing topic of LTCC talk

Jamie Orr will discuss the potential and possibilities of 3-D printing for the fields of technology, art, medicine, and more at Lake Tahoe Community College on May 25.

She’ll explore what 3-D printing is, how it works, and what sorts of items can be created via a 3-D printer – even a

homemade pizza.

Orr is an entrepreneur, physicist, and educator with expertise across a range of technical fields. She is a co-founder and CEO of Mountain Lab, South Lake Tahoe's co-working space and innovation hub. Orr received her bachelor's in physics from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. She also earned a master's in experimental condensed matter physics, studying the fabrication and characterization of magnetic nanostructures. She earned her doctorate in theoretical physics from UC Davis. As an instructor, she developed research and curricular programs in renewable energy technology and efficiency, nanotechnology, biomedical engineering, and 3-D printing.

The free talk starts at 6pm in the college's Aspen Room.