Letter: How a developer can prepare an area plan

Publisher's note: ***The following is an exchange between Tahoe Vista resident Ellie Waller and Placer County Planning Director Michael Johnson regarding the Martis Valley Area Plan.***

Johnson: I have provided responses to your inquiries below. It appears there is some mis-information being circulated, as the county is not a part of the preparation of the "Martis Valley West Area Plan". As noted below, there is nothing in county law that prohibits a property owner from preparing an area plan. Should a property owner chose to prepare such a plan, the plan would be subject to the same extensive public review as any other document submitted to the county. For further clarification, I have provided responses below. Let me know if you have any questions.

—

Waller: I found out that Placer County is the lead on the Martis Valley West Area Plan. Placer (?) has enlisted Lew Feldman, attorney for the project and Kurt Krieg, the applicant for the project to complete the draft Martis Valley West Area Plan before the public has opportunity to participate and comment. Placer County has not retained the services of Lew Feldman or Kurt Krieg. The applicant is preparing the Martis Valley West Area Plan as a part of its application – there is nothing in county regulations that prohibit an applicant from preparing such a plan. As is customary, any submitted applications/documents will be processed through the county, and a full public review will be included.

1). When was Mr. Feldman and Mr. Kreig asked by Placer County

to start this process?

Johnson: As noted above, the county did not retain the services of Mr. Feldman or Mr. Krieg. This is an applicant-initiated project.

Waller: 2). Why wasn't the public asked to participate? Being this is the first Resort Recreation District-based area plan amendment to the Regional Plan update separate from the RPU EIS, I believe Placer and TRPA must be even more diligent in engaging the public.

Johnson: Once an application is submitted to the county, the public will be engaged in the review process. At this time, the county has no documents for the public to review.

Waller: Further, while the proposed specific plan is a project, the proposed area plan is an amendment to the TRPA Regional Plan. This process will set a precedent for all future area plans, master plans, and other special plans which may be proposed to the TRPA Regional Plan and/or Placer County's future area plan, and it would be in all of our best interests to ensure the public is sufficiently notified, engaged, and included in these plan processes.

Johnson: As with all county and TRPA projects, the public will have more than sufficient opportunity to review and provide comments prior to any public hearings.

Waller: Mr. Feldman stated the area plan document will possibly be released in two weeks. He also stated that because there are no adjacent private property owners this is a non-traditional area plan, and the area plan process did not warrant notification to people in North Shore.

Johnson: I cannot attest to Mr. Feldman's statements. As will all county projects, a robust public review process will be included, and residents of North Shore will have adequate opportunity to review and comment on the proposal.

Waller: As several members of the public stated, the project that is driving this area plan will mean development in the Lake Tahoe Basin that all of us can see forever, and traffic all of us will be impacted by. I request Placer County notify and engage all who will be impacted by this project, including residents, second homeowners and visitors who currently enjoy the mountain ridgeline views along North Shore.

Johnson: Until such time that the visual analysis is completed as part of the environmental review, it is premature to conclude what impacts may or may not result. A visual impact analysis is being prepared as part of the environmental document for this project, and the visual analysis will assess impacts that may be created by the project.

Waller: Finally, I have been asking for updates to the process since September 2013. Therefore it was even more surprising to learn that East-West Partners and others have already started the Martis Valley West Area Plan process behind closed doors. This is yet another precedent that Placer County should not be allowing. As you are aware, North Shore communities are already frustrated with finding out about new Plans and projects and what they mean "after the fact."

Johnson: As noted above, there is nothing that prohibits a property owner from preparing/submitting an area plan as part of its application. Should such a document be submitted, that document will be subject to extensive county and public review. Accordingly, there will be plenty of opportunity for the public to review and comments on submitted documents prior to any public hearing.

Alaska wilderness film to be shown in SLT

Lake of the Sky Outfitters is showing the movie “Alone Across Alaska, 1000 Miles of Wilderness” on April 25 at 7pm.

It is the story of one man’s traverse of Alaska’s Brooks Range. Stunning scenery and abundant wildlife highlight this film.

It is free to attend, but seating is limited. RSVP to 530.541.1027.

The shop is located at 1023 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe.

Calif. wildlife checkpoint on Highway 395

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife will be conducting a wildlife checkpoint operation April 28 to promote safety, education and compliance with law and regulations.

CDFW law enforcement division will be conducting the inspection on southbound Hightway 395, south of Bishop on that Monday from 8am-4pm.

The wildlife checkpoint is being conducted to protect and conserve fish and wildlife, and to encourage safety and sportsmanship by promoting voluntary compliance with laws, rules and regulations through education, preventative patrol and enforcement.

All anglers and hunters will be required to stop and submit to an inspection. CDFW officers will also be providing informative literature about the invasive quagga mussel and New Zealand mudsnail.

Swanson: 'Jobs and economic development are my top priority'



Angela Swanson

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News asked the six El Dorado County supervisor candidates a series of questions. All are the same except for one that is specific to each candidate. This is the final installment.***

Name: Angela Swanson

Age: 53

Occupation: City councilwoman, school facilities planning consultant, and grant writer

Education: B.A. political science, University of California,

Berkeley

Post graduate coursework

What elected, civic, nonprofit boards or groups are or have you been affiliated with and in what capacity?: Councilmember, city of South Lake Tahoe 2010-14

• Vice chair and board member, Tahoe Transportation District 2011-14

• Board member, California Tahoe Conservancy, 2011-12

• Board member, CalTahoe Emergency Services Authority, 2011-14

• Board member, South Lake Tahoe Basin Waste Management Authority, 2010-11

• Board member, Tahoe Prosperity Center

Board member, Lake Tahoe Unified School District 2005-09

• Clerk of the board

• Approved two-way immersion program

• Protected class-size reduction

Member, Lake Tahoe Collaborative

Board member, Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation

Board member, Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe

Member, Rotary Club of South Lake Tahoe

Member, Zawadisha

Steering Committee, 56-Acre Project (Lakeview Commons) 2008-10

Co-chair, Measure A/G Steering Committee, a $64.5M school bond

PTA president, Sierra House Elementary and South Tahoe Middle

schools

Site Council member, Sierra House and South Tahoe Middle schools

“Team Mom” for numerous Little League and football teams

“Dance Mom” for 14 years with Academy of Dance Arts

Lifetime member, Ladies Auxiliary, Veterans of Foreign Wars

Traffic is horrible on Fridays and Sundays throughout the county. Will you commit to not voting for any big subdivisions unless there is a plan to widen Highway 50? Why or why not?: El Dorado County has traffic congestion caused by population centers along the 50 corridor compounded by tourists trekking to Lake Tahoe and Apple Hill. I’ve driven that route for 20 years and have watched the traffic increase. I am an advocate for a multi-pronged approach reducing congestion that includes expanding light rail rapid transit westward from El Dorado Hills, improving public transit to tourist centers, and tying residential growth to traffic mitigation.

I think it is oversimplifying to tie all future residential development decisions to the plans of a behemoth state agency, Caltrans. There needs to be a strategy to develop a transportation capable of handling resident and tourist needs that is state-funded without adding miles of highway lanes.

What is your opinion on a proposed November initiative to control growth?: There are currently several competing initiatives gather signatures to qualify for the November ballot. Years of high-density residential development along the Highway 50 corridor have led to gridlock. We must fix traffic first. I support the efforts to limit residential growth in favor of business and commercial growth.

What are your thoughts of making Lake Tahoe its own county?: I haven’t seen a groundswell of support for the region seceding

from El Dorado and Placer counties to form a new Lake Tahoe County. What problems do we solve and how many more do we trade for?

After years of neglect, we recognize that we are not going to settle for mediocrity. This beautiful region is stepping into a new generation, and is already redefining a more robust economic base, rebuilding a sense of local pride and becoming an active and engaged community. We can demand more from and give more to county government.

What entities would you not take money from?: I would not take money from an individual or organization whose values or behavior I consider illegal or unethical. Due to the controversial nature of development politics on the West Slope I will not take funds from large developers.

What would you do to boost the economy?: Local job opportunities need to be broad-based and offer long-term viability. Thoughtful and effective government can help ensure our community can invest in its families, education and future. We begin, first, by stabilizing and expanding existing business. Second, we need to develop the infrastructure necessary to draw new economic growth. That infrastructure begins with adequate cell and broadband coverage, continues into infrastructure renewal. This includes private property both commercial and residential. Why would anyone invest in the South Shore if we don't ourselves? The investment moves on to recreational facilities including bike paths. Third, we utilize the resources of the county's Economic Development Division and jobs creation network, Sierra Economic Development Corporation, to partner with local business and community leaders to recruit new business. It's time to harness county resources to build a vibrant, viable community.

What is the No. 1 issue facing District 5 and how do you propose to resolve it?: Jobs and economic development are my top priority, as I just discussed. Just as important is my

commitment to return our fair share of the county's budget and resources to District 5. The county is the primary provider of all human services, including senior services, child protection services, public health, corrections, and bus service. Our community deserves more return for its tax dollars.

For example, we talk about restoring bus service to Meyers. That can be done through social service program funding intended to support transporting those in need. A second example, the newly reformed recreation department only recently catalogued the recreation facilities on the East Slope. We've lost thousands of dollars in maintenance and equipment funding because they didn't know what's here. It's time for parity in spending.

Supervisors meet only once a year in Lake Tahoe. Do you believe this is fair representation? Why or why not?: The Board of Supervisors needs to meet more frequently in South Lake Tahoe. I've already spoken to two supervisors about meeting in South Lake Tahoe quarterly. There is support, particularly if we also hold town hall meetings in other supervisorial districts as appropriate. The board needs to be accessible to the citizens it serves.

However, it takes more than holding the Board of Supervisors meetings in Tahoe to make District 5 truly present in county decision-making. I would immediately begin holding regular meetings with the county's chief administrative officer, Terri Daly, and South Lake Tahoe's city manager and mayor of South Lake Tahoe. These meetings build commonality and shared goals that will benefit families and build just representation.

Would you have voted for Red Hawk to be built and to divert Caltrans funds for interchanges? Those decisions are still negatively affecting the South Shore. Is there anything you would do to change the status quo?: I would have voted against the Red Hawk project as it was not in the best interests of my

constituents. Moreover, the county failed to secure the compensation for first costs, long-term maintenance of the new infrastructure and community services. As for status quo changes. I think the ship has essentially sailed but the lesson must be remembered.

Would you support having more tax dollars from the county coming to the South Shore? Currently, more dollars leave the basin than come back.: Tax dollar leakage impacts all of District 5 and is a top priority. For instance, the majority of TOT in the county comes from the South Shore, but is primarily spent on the West Slope. The same is true of specialized funds for parks and recreation, transportation, etc. Getting these dollars back into our district will require prioritizing opportunities for recapture with staff, and then negotiation with my fellow supervisors during budget discussions. One example: The South Shore accounts for about 40 percent of the District Attorney's Office caseload, yet the staffing has been reduced from five to just two assistant DA's.

The county and city of South Lake Tahoe have a long history of not getting along. How would you propose to improve the relationship?: I am uniquely qualified to bridge the relationship gap as I am presently a member of the City Council and have an excellent relationship with the city manager and my fellow council members. We now have a council built on local collaboration and problem solving. We developed a local government which listens to, engages the community and encourages participation. I am ready to bring that same level of collaboration and cooperation to the Board of Supervisors.

Having served on numerous board (TTD and Conservancy, etc.) I understand the perspectives of both agencies in major policy areas. I know where we have areas of agreement and disagreement. I've also had a close history with the 56-acre (Lakeview Commons/campground) property and am part of its emergence as our community's gathering place. It is the

cornerstone for our shared recreation vision and an opportunity to shed old ill-will .

What is your vision for Meyers and how will you make it a reality?: It is the collective vision of the residents that matters. Meyers has a heart and soul; never more evident than at area plan meetings or when cheering locals welcomed home our Golden Girls. I have listened to many residents and understand the local pride, the local values.

Making those values real starts with a ZIP code. Meyers, CA 96155. Beneath the arguments over the area plan and Caltrans signal lights and the future of the Tveten property is an underlying hunger to be recognized as a community with places to gather and decision-making authority. Meyers, California, should be identified as an independent place. We would also look at creating a reasonable governance structure, such as a Meyers Community Services District, which would the local control issues such as bike paths, recreation and programs facilities and weigh in on development issues.

Why should someone vote for you over someone else?: I get the job done. My entire history in South Lake Tahoe has been about improving our community for the families that live and work here. From my first efforts at the Sierra House playground to the school bond to Lakeview Commons, I deliver. Second, I have the skills and experience to be effective from Day 1. I know the issues, have the relationships and the experience to negotiate with the four other supervisors from the Wet Slope. Third, I understand that making District 5 and El Dorado County successful requires relationships in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. They control the purse strings and we have to meet them head on.

How do you overcome a possible credibility issue when you gave up the seat you had on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board, have spent the most taxpayer money of any City Council member on travel and took money for a nonprofit from a man now

serving time in federal prison?: There is no credibility issue. The voters have elected me twice into office, proof of their confidence in my abilities. They understood that I stepped down from the school board a few months early because I was pursuing employment opportunities that could have taken me out of the region. By putting the needs of the community before my own and stepping down a few months early, I ensured that my seat could be filled and the school board would function properly with five members. Having served on the school board with only four members and more recently in the same position on the City Council, I know that was the right choice.

My travel reimbursements are for council approved activities. I believe, as does the council, that it is important to be educated on policy issues and to build relationships with our elected representatives and agency heads in Sacramento. I cannot answer why other electeds decide not to. The last item deserves no additional follow up, as the county district attorney has declared there was “no wrongdoing.”

What do you do for fun?: My latest passion is standup paddleboarding. Anything that gets me on or in the water is my idea of fun. I also enjoy biking and puttering in my garden.

Tell us something about yourself that people might not know: I rafted the Tana River in Kenya and rode a camel in the Sahara Desert.

Letter: Time to rally behind

Barton Ranch

To the community,

I would like to thank everyone who contacted the Lake Tahoe Historical Society and myself regarding the Barton Ranch property. I have had such a wonderful response from members of our community who would love to see this property saved rather than demolished. It is unfortunate that the Lake Tahoe Historical Society cannot just write a check and save the property, but perhaps the community can find a solution that is agreeable to the owners and involves our city and the community in a joint effort to maintain this piece of property.

The LTHS has been working on this project behind the scenes since late last fall. When it seemed that more was needed, a letter dated March 21 was sent to Shelly Aldean, the Governing Board chair at Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. On March 28, the "Notice of Availability of Negative Declaration" was published. On March 29, the LTHS sent a copy of the March 21 letter to Shelly Aldean at TRPA and to Nancy Kerry, city manager of the city of South Lake Tahoe. To date we have not received a reply from Ms. Aldean at the TRPA nor from Ms. Kerry at the city of SLT.

The closing date for comments on this negative declaration is April 25 at 4pm. I am asking everyone who is interested in preserving this property to please send a comment to Hilary Roverud, Development Services director for the city of South Lake Tahoe. She is also the city of South Lake Tahoe's representative to the Advisory Planning Commission of Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. I am not sure if this may be a conflict of interest or not. However, her address is below in the letter that the LTHS sent by certified mail.

If you care about this historic piece of property and its role

in our history, then please send a letter to show your support and the community's interest in preserving the Barton Ranch. We know that TRPA considered this property "historic" and prevented the buildings from being torn down once before, so how can they walk away now?

Catherine Whelan, president Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Liberty offers payment options

Liberty Utilities has partnered with local businesses in the communities it serves to make paying utility bill more convenient.

Starting April 24, Liberty Utilities' customers can pay their utility bill at one of the businesses listed below:

Tahoe Keys Liquor, 2297 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe

Kmart, 1056 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe

Kings Beach Chevron, 8369 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach,

Portola Depot, 108 Commercial St., Portola

Loyalton Pharmacy, 701 Main St., Loyalton.

Customers wishing to make their utility payment at one of the above locations must bring their bill stub with them, and pay by cash, check or money order. There is no additional convenience fee.

For payment options, go online and click on the "Pay Your Bill" link at the top.

Middle-aged kids moving in with parents

By Walter Hamilton, Los Angeles Times

Debbie Rohr lives with her husband and twin teenage sons in a well-tended three-bedroom home in Salinas.

The ranch-style house has a spacious kitchen that looks out on a yard filled with rosebushes. It's a modest but comfortable house, the type that Rohr, 52, pictured for herself at this stage of life.

She just never imagined that it would be her childhood home, a return to a bedroom where she once hung posters of Olivia Newton-John and curled up with her beloved Mrs. Beasley doll.

Driven by economic necessity – Rohr has been chronically unemployed and her husband lost his job last year – she moved her family back home with her 77-year-old mother.

At a time when the still sluggish economy has sent a flood of jobless young adults back home, older people are quietly moving in with their parents at twice the rate of their younger counterparts.

For seven years through 2012, the number of Californians aged 50 to 64 who live in their parents' homes swelled 67.6 percent to about 194,000, according to the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and the Insight Center for Community Economic Development.

The jump is almost exclusively the result of financial hardship caused by the recession rather than for other reasons, such as the need to care for aging parents, said

Steven P. Wallace, a UCLA professor of public health who crunched the data.

Read the whole story

Expect delays traveling through Tahoe

By Lake Tahoe News staff

It’s not just Kingsbury Grade that will be torn up this year. Caltrans will be working on six water-quality improvement projects on the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Plus, work in the center of South Lake Tahoe will tie up traffic now that the Harrison Avenue project has begun. This project will include making some of the side streets one way.

The Kingsbury Grade project is more about fixing that stretch of state highway that links Lake Tahoe and the Carson Valley than it is water quality.

The grade will always be open to residents and all businesses will be open. What will be off limits from May 1-23 is the ability to drive from the basin to the valley and vice versa. People on either side will only be able to get to the top of the summit, not over it during that time frame. The same limitations will be in effect after Labor Day until the end of construction season.

Work will continue at night in June, July and August. Delays are expected. But through traffic will be allowed during those months.

More info is online.

Caltrans projects are designed to improve safety and traffic flow by encouraging walking and bicycling with wider shoulders, left-turn pockets, repaving the highway, the installation of sidewalks, crosswalks and traffic signals.

Caltrans projects:

Highway 50

• From Lake Tahoe Airport to the Y

• May 5-Oct. 15; should be done in one season

• Estimated cost: $12.1 million

• Anticipated closures: Off-peak season: from 7pm-11am, Monday through Friday; peak season: from 7pm-9am,Monday through Friday. Up to 20-minute delays.

• From Johnson Pass Road through Meyers to Incline Road

• May 1-Oct. 15; should be done in one season

• Estimated cost: $15.3 million

• Anticipated closures: Monday through Thursday from 6am-6pm, off the road by noon Friday. Daytime closures are scheduled throughout the project unless traffic impacts necessitate switching to night work.

Highway 89

• From one-tenth mile north of Eagle Falls sidehill viaduct No. 5 to Meeks Creek Bridge

• Now-Oct. 15; project expected to finish in fall 2015

• Estimated cost: $20 million

• Anticipated closures: Off-peak season: daytime Monday

through Thursday, 6am-6pm, No lane closures after 1am Friday. Peak season: nighttime Monday through Friday, 6pm-6am. Up to 20-minute delays.

• From Wilson Street in Tahoma to Tahoe City (to Cherry Street this season)

• May 1-Oct. 15; project is expected to finish in fall 2016

• Estimated cost: $41 million

• Anticipated closures: Off-peak season (Memorial Day-June 15): around the clock from midnight Sunday until noon Friday. Peak season (June 15-Labor Day): around the clock from midnight Sunday until 10am Friday. Up to 20-minute delays.

• Note: In conjunction with this project, Southwest Gas is in its final season of gas line relocations along the highway from Ward Avenue to Granlibakken Road. Anticipated lane closures for the gas work are: off-peak: midnight Sunday to 1pm Monday; and daily from 6pm to 1pm Monday through Friday. Peak season: midnight Sunday to noon Monday; daily from 7pm to noon Monday through Thursday; and 7pm Thursday to 10am Friday. Up to 20-minute delays.

• From Tahoe City to Squaw Valley

• Late May-Oct. 15; project expected to be completed this season

• Estimated cost: $4 million

• Anticipated closures: Off-peak season: Nighttime closures, 6pm-10am Sunday through Saturday. Peak season: Nighttime closures, 6pm-10am Sunday through Friday. Up to 20-minute delays.

Highway 28

• From Chipmunk Street to the junction of Highway 267 in Kings

Beach

• Now-June 30 and Sept. 7-Oct. 15 (no work on highway in July and August); project is expected to be completed in fall 2015

• Estimated cost: $36 million

• Anticipated closures: 7am-10pm, Monday through Thursday, off the road by noon Friday.

In addition to the Caltrans projects, Placer County's Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Program is already under construction. The streetscape project includes reducing Highway 28 from four lanes to three and installing drainage facilities for water-quality improvements.

Here is a Caltrans construction map.

K's Kitchen: Fresh squeezed lemonade

By Kathryn Reed

For much of my life I had a lemon tree out back. But as a kid you don't realize what that means.

In fact, I didn't realize the significance of the tree until my parents moved. And by this time I was in my 40s. For decades I took those yellow orbs for granted.

I didn't realize how expensive lemons could be at a grocery store. I didn't realize how little juice they might have. I really didn't realize how spoiled I had become.

I used to get bags of lemons from my parents' tree when I

would visit them in the Bay Area. That ended a few years ago when they moved to an area of the state where lemon trees don’t grow.

Lemons can be squeezed into so many dishes. But one thing I really love is making lemonade. While there are now some good store bought varieties on the market, there is nothing like homemade lemonade. And the recipe can always be changed up accommodate those who like a more bitter or more sweet beverage.

A friend from the Bay Area gave me lemons recently. With the rather warm weather Tahoe has been having, lemonade sounded so good.



Fresh Lemonade

3 C water

1C lemon juice

½ C sugar

Mix all together. Serve chilled.

Graphene – it's the material of tomorrow

By Nick Bilton, New York Times

I just want to say one word to you. Just one word.

No, fans of "The Graduate," the word isn't "plastics."

It's "graphene."

Graphene is the strongest, thinnest material known to exist. A form of carbon, it can conduct electricity and heat better than anything else. And get ready for this: It is not only the hardest material in the world, but also one of the most pliable.

Only a single atom thick, it has been called the wonder material.

Graphene could change the electronics industry, ushering in flexible devices, supercharged quantum computers, electronic clothing and computers that can interface with the cells in your body.

While the material was discovered a decade ago, it started to gain attention in 2010 when two physicists at the University of Manchester were awarded the Nobel Prize for their experiments with it. More recently, researchers have zeroed in on how to commercially produce graphene.

The American Chemical Society said in 2012 that graphene was discovered to be 200 times stronger than steel and so thin that a single ounce of it could cover 28 football fields. Chinese scientists have created a graphene aerogel, an ultralight material derived from a gel, that is one-seventh the weight of air. A cubic inch of the material could balance on one blade of grass.

Read the whole story