SLT council discusses idea of not having rep on TRPA board

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe City Councilman Bruce Grego's desire to send a message to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency by not filling the city's seat on the Governing Board was voted down by his colleagues, but not before the idea was well vetted.

Grego's contention is he believes the bi-state regulatory agency interferes with land use issues and stalls progress.



Bruce Grego

"They have been here 40 years and it's the same garbage from them year in and year out," Grego said at the Jan. 25 council meeting.

Mayor Hal Cole said having a city rep on the board is necessary, especially if the Tahoe Valley Community Plan is going to get approved.

Councilman Tom Davis said the problem is the board is "tilted to non-basin residents."

Councilwoman Claire Fortier said, "I think everyone here harbors some kind of feeling against the TRPA, but now is not the time (to protest)."

Councilwoman Angela Swanson called the appointment potentially

the single-most important one on their agenda.

Once the discourse was over, Grego agreed to make a one-year appointment and to have the council revisit the possibility of leaving the TRPA seat vacant if things don’t change in the coming year. Fortier was unanimously appointed to the Governing Board.

The other one-year appointments are:

Angela Swanson:

• California Tahoe Conservancy

• Cal Tahoe JPA

• Waste Management JPA

• Tahoe Transportation District, alternate

Hale Cole:

• City Selection Committee

• Abandoned Vehicle Abatement

• Recreation (Measure S) JPA

Bruce Grego:

• LAFCO

• TTD

• League of California Cities

• Waste Management JPA, alternate

Claire Fortier:

• Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

• Cal Tahoe JPA

Tom Davis:

• Airport Commission

• Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority

• Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce, non voting

• South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association, non voting

• TRPA, alternate

• League of California Cities, alternate

Irvin Coe was reappointed the citizen rep to Clean Tahoe. City Manager Tony O'Rourke was directed to pick a staff person to be on Clean Tahoe.

John Collins will resume being the representative on the El Dorado County Commission on Aging.

O'Rourke and City Attorney Patrick Enright will be the PADMA members.

Series of meetings related to Homewood's proposed development

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and Placer County have released the Homewood Mountain Resort Master Plan draft environmental impact report for public review and comment.

Comments will be accepted until March 20.

JMA Ventures, owners of the West Shore resort, want to

redevelop the resort’s two existing base areas and replace chairlifts. Also included in the master plan proposal are a year-round mid-mountain day lodge and overnight lodging accommodations at the base areas.

Public meeting include:

· Feb. 9 at 9:30am – TRPA Advisory Planning Commission at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency office in Stateline.

· Feb. 10 at 6pm – Placer County North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council at the Tahoe City PUD conference room.

· Feb. 17 at 10am – Placer County Planning Commission at the Granlibakken Resort & Conference Center, Tahoe City.

· Feb. 23 at 9:30am in Kings Beach, the TRPA Governing Board will review the EIR..

Homewood Mountain Resort plans to host an open house tentatively scheduled for March 4 at the South Lodge off of Tahoe Ski Bowl Way from 5-7pm. The open house invites the general public to view exhibits and other updates related to the Homewood Mountain Resort Ski Area Master Plan.

To review the Homewood Mountain Resort Master Plan, go online.

Dog kisses might not be a healthy indulgence

By Cynthia Hubert, Sacramento Bee

They give you joy. They give you loyalty. They give you sloppy kisses.

But before you allow Fido or Fluffy to climb into bed with you at night, as an increasing number of Americans are doing, know that they can also give you something else: zoonoses.

A UC Davis veterinary professor has penned an article for a scientific journal showing that people who allow their pets to lick them, give them “kisses” or sleep with them are at risk for a variety of diseases known as zoonoses. The conditions can range from the mundane to the life threatening.

Bruno Chomel and his co-author, Ben Sun, emphasize that pets provide many health benefits, including stress relief, and they stop short of recommending that people abstain from smooching their pooches. But in reviewing reports from several countries, they argue that such interactions carry some risk, particularly among infants and people whose immune systems have been weakened by disease, chemotherapy or other medicines.

Read the whole story

CTC unable to start new projects because of funding

By Kathryn Reed

With the current budget situation in California, the California Tahoe Conservancy is struggling to do more than maintain the status quo.

“Bond money has virtually run out. The remaining funds are earmarked,” CTC Executive Director Patrick Wright told his board last week. “We are probably facing one of the most

challenging times for the Conservancy."

Although Gov. Jerry Brown's proposed budget doesn't send chills through the agency, it is giving people pause for what the future may hold because by the 2012-13 budget the bond money should be gone.

"Our success is dependent on the governor and Legislature making the budget work," Wright said.

A large unknown is what will happen with the proposed water bond that has been delayed in being put before the voters. Tied up in the proposal is money the CTC would get for various environmental improvement projects.

Wright mentioned the nearly $1 million grant awarded last month to the Tahoe region as part of the Sustainable Communities Program. The Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization received the $995,000 grant.

Karen Fink, senior planner with the TMPO and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, in the proposal wrote, "The ongoing Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Regional Plan Update (RPU) recognizes the need to transform the outdated, rigid regulatory framework into a system that integrates environmental, land use, transit and housing programs, and encourages redevelopment as a means to meet economic, community and natural resource goals. The Lake Tahoe Prosperity Plan identifies the need for redevelopment to lead the transformation from a declining, seasonal, casino-based economy to a vibrant, year-round, ecotourism and environmental innovation based economy."

Other items from the Jan. 20 CTC meeting include:

• The acceptance of $200,000 from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for costs associate with restoration plans for the old Tahoe Pines campground in Meyers. (CTC acquired the property in 2007 and had plans to rehab the area.)

• The board authorized spending up to $1.08 million to thin 395 acres of Conservancy-owned land throughout the basin this year.

LTUSD deficit may swell to $2.6 mil.; depends on state

By Kathryn Reed

It's a bit of hoping for the best, planning for worst when it comes to forecasting what the Lake Tahoe Unified School District budgets will look like for the next two years.

Educators have their fingers crossed the proposed June ballot initiative by Gov. Jerry Brown passes. But the reality is it may never see the light of day. That will be determined by the Legislature in March.

The best-case scenario as presented to the board Jan. 25 is the continued running deficit of $1.2 million. The worst-case option is another $1.4 million will be added to that systemic problem to bring the district's ledgers showing $2.6 million in red.

CFO Deb Yates and Human Resources Director Jim Watson delivered the sobering news Tuesday to a packed house at the district office. Watson went over possible elimination of positions for the next two years. His job is one that could be cut in 2011-12.

This would mean Superintendent Jim Tarwater would spend all of

his time at the district office. He currently divides his day as principal of the Environmental Magnet School. Someone would have to take over those duties.

Watson said during a recent webinar a leading economist said what makes this different from previous budgets is “this really is a sky is falling budget to go with the sky is falling rhetoric.”

California is grappling with a $25 billion deficit. For the past several years lawmakers have put a Band-Aid on the issue and deferred some of the more painful decisions. Brown has said he wants to stop that practice and begin making the hard decisions.

He wants voters to continue on with tax hikes that were put into effect two years ago. The Republican Legislature is resisting the Democrat’s idea.

Even if the proposal makes it on the June ballot, that does not give this or most districts much time to figure out what they are doing because most fiscal years begin July 1. This is why LTUSD is essentially working on parallel budgets based on funding possibilities.

The LTUSD board took no action this week. (Sue Novasel was absent.) But action will have to be taken soon even if it means revising things when the state figures out its mess.

Teachers have another week to let the district know if they will be taking the golden handshake retirement option. If enough people pursue early retirement, pink slips will likely not have to be issued for the coming school year.

A slew of ideas were outlined at the meeting as possible ways to maintain solvency. When it comes to positions, reduction in the number of school days or the furlough day, those would have to be negotiated with the unions.

The state allowed districts to go from maintaining a 3 percent reserve to 1 percent for this school year. The proposed budget from Brown says districts will be allowed to maintain a 0.33 percent reserve.

“I’m hearing if this is not the time for reserves, I’m not sure when is. No one I’ve crossed paths with has seen it worse,” Yates told the board.

Placer County yanks rep from TRPA, puts Sevison on board

By Gus Thomson, Auburn Journal

Four Placer County supervisors voted Tuesday to remove fellow supervisor Jennifer Montgomery from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency governing board.

But Montgomery – bolstered by a contingent of supporters who traveled to the Auburn meeting from Tahoe – didn’t go quietly.

Montgomery has served as board appointee to the Tahoe planning panel since her election to the Board of Supervisors four years ago.

A statement by the District 4 supervisor at December’s Tahoe planning board disagreeing with the county’s status quo stance on tourist-accommodation unit transfers for developers raised the hackles of fellow Placer board members.

At Tuesday’s meeting, Supervisor Kirk Uhler made the motion to replace Montgomery with her alternate on the board, Larry Sevison. Sevison has served 17 years on the Tahoe board during four stints – including the six months in 2007 after

Montgomery's predecessor Bruce Kranz was removed for voting against a board decision at the planning agency panel.

Uhler said Montgomery had a chance at a Board of Supervisors meeting in October to clarify her concerns about tourist accommodation transfers during broader discussion of Tahoe planning issues.

Read the whole story

S. Tahoe Grizzlies dominate on home ice

By Ted Parkhill

It was another amazing weekend of ice hockey in South Lake Tahoe. This past weekend featured teams from San Jose and San Francisco playing against South Lake Tahoe's Grizzlies.

The San Jose Junior Sharks Pee Wees (ages 11 and 12) faced the Tahoe Grizzlies Pee Wees in a double-header. The first place Grizzlies solidified their lead league by sweeping the series against the Sharks. Both games were really close and could have gone to either team. The Grizzlies dug deep and took advantage of their opponent in the third period of both games as the other team tired out up here in the fresh air.



Carson Bailey, left wing for the Pee Wees, carries the puck over the blue line. Photos/Provided

Game one on Saturday, the Grizzlies won 3-2 with Reiss Jensen of Reno leading the scoring with two goals.

Game two on Sunday morning was just as close with the Grizzlies winning 4-3.

Highlights included Matt Newberger of South Lake Tahoe opening the scoring early in the first period with a wicked slapshot to the top shelf. The game winner, late in the third, came from a strong effort by Spencer Lloyd of Reno.

The Tahoe Grizzlies Squirts (ages 9 and 10) faced the San Francisco Sabre Cats. The undefeated Grizzlies Squirts cruised by the Sabre Cats on Saturday afternoon 10-1.

On Sunday morning, the Sabre Cats returned refreshed and played a much stronger game, although the Grizzlies triumphed by winning 4-0.

The highlight of the season was the all new “Mick Trick”. Mickey Sullivan of South Lake Tahoe scored a double hat-trick (a hat trick is scoring three goals in a game) by scoring six goals in Saturday’s game. An unbelievable effort that was worthy of any Gretzky or Crosby. Special mention goes to defenseman Axel Sorenson of South Lake Tahoe who scored his first goal as a Squirt. He did it again on Sunday by scoring a Power Play goal.



Travis Wood, defense with the Grizzlies Pee Wees, clears the puck from his zone.

Nick Ilvento earned his second shut out of the season.

The Pee Wees and the Squirts are in first place in their respective NORCAL divisions. This weekend the Tahoe Grizzlies Pee Wees are headed to Fresno for two games against the Fresno Falcons. The Tahoe Grizzlies Squirts do not play again until early February in San Jose and Roseville.

The next home games are Saturday afternoon Feb. 12 and Feb. 13 at the South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena (1176 Rufus Allen Blvd.). Admission is always free.

Ted Parkhill is with South Tahoe Amateur Hockey Association.

LTCC theater fundraiser

The Lake Tahoe Community College Theatre Arts Department is offering up a romantic cabaret Feb. 11 with “Loving You: A Musical Valentine.”

The musical cabaret will feature songs of love from Sinatra to Sondheim sung and danced by some of Lake Tahoe's most talented performers. A variety of desserts will be served beginning at 7:15pm. Entertainment will begin at 8pm.

This is a fundraiser for the upcoming Theatre Department production of "Chicago." Tickets are $20 and include a dessert buffet. Tickets will be available for advance sale from the Theatre Department and performers, as well as at the door.

Midas revokes S. Tahoe franchise, 4 others

By Bob Brundage, Reno Gazette-Journal

Five Midas stores in the Reno-Tahoe area and one in Northern California recently lost their franchises and were forced to close their doors.

Two of the six stores are in Reno, one is in Sparks, one is in Carson City, one in South Lake Tahoe and one is in Placerville.

All of the outlets were owned by Mallard Group Ltd., which could not be reached for comment.

"That would have been in mid-December," said Bob Troyer, director of corporate affairs for Midas, of the closings. "We terminated the franchise we had in place, and we terminated the relationships with that franchise."

Read the whole story

Snowsports Week at Sierra-at-Tahoe

Sierra-at-Tahoe is offering discounted lift tickets for Snowsports Week – Feb. 7-10. Tickets are discounted to $35 from $71 for a full-day lift ticket.

Tickets are only valid during Snowsports Week. Lift tickets may be purchased locally, but must be purchased in advance.

Each year money from this event fund five nonprofit organizations – Barton Memorial Hospital Foundation, Lake Tahoe Community College Foundation, Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation, Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care, and Sierra-at-Tahoe Education Foundation – all within the South Shore community.

Tickets will not be available at Sierra-at-Tahoe.

Sales locations:

7/11 on Kingsbury Grade;

Powder House at Heavenly Gondola and Pioneer Trail; Explore Tahoe;

Sports LTD in the Village Center;

Rainbow Mountain Sports;

Super 8 Motel;

CVS pharmacy at Bijou and the Y;

Lake Tahoe Community College Bookstore;

Barton Foundation;

Raley’s at the Y;

Lira’s Market;

Tahoe Paradise Chevron;

Sunrise Ski & Snowboard; or

call Barton Foundation at (530) 543.5909.