South Shore teens take charge of issues facing them

By Kathryn Reed

So many groups on the South Shore are dedicated to providing services to youth. It's adults identifying problems or noting successes; it's adults finding solutions. Seldom, though, are the youths asked what they think.

In a twist seldom seen, the adults in the room Wednesday night deferred to high school students. Daniel Reyes, chairman that night for the South Lake Tahoe Youth Commission Focus Group, told Boys & Girls Club Executive Director Karen Houser she could speak further when the "open forum" part of the agenda came up.



South Lake Tahoe Youth Commission Focus Group

Houser was fine with that.

Reyes sounded like he had been running a meeting for more years than he's been alive. He didn't let people ramble on too much. He kept to the agenda. He asked for motions to be made, votes to be cast.

The chairman duties rotate each meeting, as does operations

officer and clerk. Elsa Garcia was operations officer for the night, while Ashni Patel was tasked with taking minutes on a laptop.

This group of young people fluctuates between seven and 12 at a meeting. They've been meeting since October.

"This is more about governance and not activities," Houser said. "They are focusing on issues of South Lake Tahoe (that youths care about) – gangs, transportation, lack of employment, the environment."

For now the local Boys & Girls Club oversees the group, with Shawn Tonozzi and Mary Cook the adult leaders. They work for the Boys & Girls Club. Neither appears to be much older than the teens in the room.

Tonozzi acts like an executive director would.

The goal is the group will become an official commission with teens from both sides of the state line involved. Talks are under way with South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Commission for the youth to be under their auspices because the city is not creating any more standalone commissions that report to the City Council. The parks group will likely take this up a meeting later this spring.

It could be that after the Youth Commission becomes official, a commissioner may be a liaison to other city commissions. Parks and Rec is a natural because it deals with youth activities.

With the number of Latinos in the community, it's possible a student could be a rep to the Latino Commission. The environment is of clear importance to this group based on the conversation, so the Sustainability Commission may be another route they will pursue.

One of the tasks this week was to give input for Tonozzi and

Cook as they create an application for perspective Youth Commission members. Tonozzi gave them the option to let the adults create the form. The youths unequivocally wanted input.

A minimum 2.5gpa was suggested, they agreed the form should only be in English, they want to ask about community service, to allow ninth-graders and older be voting members, and younger members to have a non-voting status.

At a future meeting they'll approve the application.

Ernie Claudio, an adviser to the group, brought in examples of what other youth commissions focus on. The purpose and structure of the commission are still things to be defined and refined.

The idea is the youth will develop the answers to issues facing them and offer solutions. Several adults are already coming to them to share how they can help or might like the youth to help them.

Keith Taylor, who is doing his senior project on youth commissions, told his peers about how groups like this are found throughout the world. He talked about a youth camp going on in China now and how Mexico City is hosting a world youth conference in August.

A major endeavor the youth are undertaking is a summit on Nov. 2-3. The students will stay at Stanford Sierra Camp at Fallen Leaf Lake. It will be about team building, governance and it will have an environmental component – per the task force's request.

The next meeting is May 4 at 6:30pm at the Boys & Girls Club in the old Al Tahoe Elementary School in South Lake Tahoe. The public is welcome.

SLT dealing with major staffing issues

By Kathryn Reed

How the South Lake Tahoe city attorney's office will function in the future is expected to be discussed at the April 27 special City Council meeting.

The goal when two attorneys were hired nearly a year ago was to cut down on the use of outside counsel.

"And it is still a goal of the council to alleviate outside counsel," Mayor Kathay Lovell said.

Jacqueline Mittelstadt resigned from her position effective this month. This leaves Patrick Enright and the support staff to handle legal matters for the city.

Enright has said the workload warrants two full-time attorneys in the city. Outside legal counsel is still going to be needed for specialties the in-house attorneys are not familiar with.

The other department head position still empty in the city – police chief – is expected to remain that way until a new city manager is hired. The police chief reports to the city manager.

To reap the desired savings by having the position filled by Capt. Martin Hewlett, he must continue to be interim chief

into the fall.

Preliminary work is being done to recruit a police chief. Lovell said the next city manager will do the actual hiring. The process to find a city manager is in the initial stages, with a headhunter being hired earlier this month.

The April 27 meeting is at 10am at Lake Tahoe Airport

TAP wants to turn votes into $7,500

Friends of Tahoe Arts Project,

Please help Tahoe Arts Project receive $7,500 from Raley's. Between now and May 12 go to the website below and vote for Tahoe Arts Project. You can vote once a day. They are giving out five cash awards to the organizations with the most votes.

Here's how:

1. Click here to read our proposal and to get to the Raley's login screen.

2. If you already have a Raley's login, enter your email address and password, click on Sign In, then click on Vote Now. If you do mpt have a login, register [it's quick and

easy] then login and click on Vote Now.

3. Save the link to your favorites or “bookmark” it so you can easily vote every day.

4. Vote today and every day from now until the end of the contest on May 12. Only one vote allowed per day per email address.

5. Please forward this to everyone on your email list.

Thank you for supporting the arts in South Lake Tahoe.

Peggy Thompson, executive director Tahoe Arts Project

CalPERS cuts investment agents like Stateline firm

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

CalPERS’ largest investment partner made dramatic concessions to the pension fund Monday, agreeing to stop hiring placement agents and to cut its management fees by $125 million.

The deal with Wall Street powerhouse Apollo Global Management underscores CalPERS’ clout in the financial world – and cuts to the heart of its efforts to cope with a scandal over the marketing middlemen known as placement agents.

Apollo has been the largest client of controversial placement agent Alfred Villalobos, a former CalPERS board member who earned at least $40 million representing Apollo in deals with the California pension fund after leaving the board in the 1990s.

Read the whole story

Placer County buying up property in Tahoe City

By Gus Thomson, Auburn Journal

Placer County is moving ahead with a new, $3.5 million building purchase in Tahoe City.

The Board of Supervisors approved an option to purchase the 11,400-square-foot Customs House building most famously formerly occupied by Starbucks.

Approval came on a 5-0 vote at a recent meeting with District 5 Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery describing the price – at under $300 per square foot – as “unbelievable” and a prudent investment.

Read the whole story

Nevada Parks initiates 75 Mile Club

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of Nevada State Parks, State Parks is partnering with the Recreational Trails Program to sponsor a 75 Mile Club.

Hike, bike, snowshoe, cross country ski or ride a horse on 75

miles of designated trails in Nevada state parks, complete and submit the tracking form and receive a Certificate of Completion and prize package.

Visitors can ride different trails or the same trail over and over again to reach a total of 75 miles traveled in the state parks. In turn, State Parks will post 75 Mile Club members' names and images on the 75 Mile Club page of State Parks' web site.

An informational brochure and mileage tracking form can be found on the following website.

USFS plan revision meetings

Recreation, forest health, fuels reduction, wildlife habitat, watershed restoration and aquatic habitat will be the subject of meetings next month conducted by the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit of the U.S. Forest Service.

The public is encouraged to attend to learn about and comment on the forest plan revision, which is agency's blue print of sorts for the future.

The first meeting is May 11 at the LTBMU Forest Supervisor's Office, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe. The other is May 13 at the North Tahoe Conference Center, 8318 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach. Both are from 5-7pm.

Each meeting will begin with an overview of the process and time line for revising the forest plan, after which participants will have the opportunity to talk with staff members regarding alternatives under consideration.

The LTBMU was in the process of revising its forest plan when

the 2008 planning rule was enjoined by the U.S. District Court. The 2000 planning rule, under which the LTBMU is now proceeding, requires the Forest Service to develop a draft environmental impact statement that analyzes several alternatives for forest plan revision.

The LTBMU has engaged the public extensively to get input on how the plan should be revised. Despite the changes in process, the public's comments and suggestions remain relevant and will continue to shape the proposed revised plan and the alternatives.

Approximately 75 percent of the Lake Tahoe Basin is managed by the Forest Service. The LTBMU's current plan is 20 years old.

More information on LTBMU forest plan revision is available here.

LTUSD bond committee issues report



The Lake Tahoe Unified School District citizens' committee that oversees the $64.5 million bond approved by voters in November 2008 has issued its annual report. Click on report for the details.

Fundraiser for STHS performing arts

South Tahoe High School Burger Night at the Red Hut on Ski Run Boulevard is April 30 from 5-7pm.

The event benefits the South Tahoe High School Performing Arts Booster Association.

Dinner includes a burger (veggie available) homemade chips, beverage and a sundae or root beer float.

Tickets are $10. They can be purchased at the door or from students enrolled in art, music or acting classes. Orders to-go can be placed by calling (530) 544.1595. Tickets are good only on April 30.

Day of the Young Child

Day of the Young Child – a fun-filled day with free activities is June 19 at Lake Tahoe Community College in South Tahoe from 10am-2pm.