South Tahoe to probe potential convention center investor

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe is waiting for a $30,000 check so it can begin its due diligence – aka background and financial checks – of Woodridge Capital Partners LLC, the firm wanting to take over the would-be convention center.

At the City Council meeting this month, attorney Lew Feldman, who has represented original developer Lake Tahoe Development Company and now Woodridge, wanted the item to be discussed at a special meeting.

The city doesn't want to use taxpayer money to pay consultants to investigate Woodridge.



South Lake Tahoe convention center project in 2007. Photo/Provided

The action unanimously taken by the council last week allows for the due diligence of Woodridge Capital Partners to be done, for the company to be an assignee to the owner

participation agreement, and for the formation of a conceptual plan of the construction of what is known as the Chateau at Heavenly Village.

The council approved the item with the fee intact, but has since scheduled a special meeting for 10am April 27. (The budget and possible increase to business license fees will also be discussed at that meeting.)

Councilmen Hal Cole and Bill Crawford were appointed as an ad hoc committee to meet with Michael Rosenfeld, CEO of Woodridge. No meeting has been scheduled between the parties. However, Rosenfeld is expected to address the full council at the April 27 meeting.

“This guy, I don’t think he has the money, but he has access to money,” Gene Palazzo, South Lake Tahoe redevelopment director, said of Rosenfeld.

City Attorney Patrick Enright echoed those sentiments.

“He has access to funds. He would obviously be doing this with others who have funds,” Enright said. “If he can’t get the financing, it’s not going to work.”

Randy Lane and John Serpa, the men behind Lake Tahoe Development Company, have been in bankruptcy court since October because of their inability to pay creditors the $54 million they are owed. They have until June 2 to come up with a plan.

Rosenfeld, so far, is the plan. He has been a player in projects this size and larger.

“Eventually, if we pick this guy, we will either amend the existing (owner participation agreement) or have a new one,” Palazzo said.

The $410 million, 11-acre project that was approved several years ago was to include two hotels – with at least one a four

star; extensive retail space (this was before commercial vacancies became the norm here); a convention center that would double as a facility local organizations could us; have a possible under or overpass linking to Heavenly Village; and open space.

What a future project may look like is unknown. The footprint is likely to remain the same because of existing permits and environmental documents. What the inside looks like is expected to change. A smaller project has also been talked about.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency permits were to expire this summer, but they will be extended for the length of time the project is in bankruptcy court, so probably another 10 months, according to Lane.

“This is not something that is going to be an easy solution even if new people come in. There are still many issues that have to be addressed on an ongoing basis,” Lane told *Lake Tahoe News*. “First, you have to make some sort of reasonable agreement with the creditors. Second, you have to wait things out and decide when it is a good time to bring the project forward. You can’t build it today for what you can sell it for. That means you don’t build it. That’s the issue.”

He said just when he thinks things are solidified something unexpected pops up.

Per the judge’s order from last month, Lane et al have been filing twice monthly reports to the court that creditors and interested parties have been receiving.

Another report is due this week, but it is the first one in May that will be the most significant because that’s when an outline of a potential deal must be filed.

“That will give us our first inclination as to whether he can make this work or not,” Enright said.

One thing that makes this situation unique is that the foundation has been poured. But it’s not one parcel. A final map was never recorded so the concrete and rebar near the Nevada border is laid on 29 parcels. That’s why foreclosure is not much of an option for creditors because then there is little or no value for someone who would want to resurrect the project.

“I think what needs to go there is what is planned there. It makes sense,” Lane said. “Whether we get to a plan or don’t will be driven an awful lot by creditors. I’m not saying we aren’t going to get consensus.”

Once Lane and his people present a plan to the bankruptcy judge by the June 2 deadline, the judge has until Aug. 2 to make a ruling.

“Our position always has been we want the creditors paid and the project to go forward,” Lane said. “We don’t have anymore money to throw at it. At some point we’ll find a solution. We would not continue to be the developer. Whoever comes in would be.”

Buying wine will help Tahoe forest

Throughout April, Parducci Wine Cellars will donate $1 from the sale of each bottle of Parducci wine to American Forests tree planting project.

PWC is committed to a minimum planting of 5,000 trees in selected national forests devastated by wildland fires. The winery’s customers will decide where the trees are planted.

By logging on to the PWC website, consumers may vote for their favorite reforestation initiative. Accordingly, donations will be awarded to the following American Forests tree planting projects:

* San Bernardino National Forest, California

* Lake Tahoe Basin, California

* Burn Canyon Fire Restoration, Colorado (Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, Gunnison)

* Hal Scott Longleaf Pine Planting, Florida

* Cache River Wetland Reforestation, Illinois

* The Glades Red Spruce Forestation, Maryland

Parducci Wine Cellars twice (2007, 2009) received the Governor’s Environmental and Economic Leadership Award, California’s highest environmental honor. The company, owned by Tom and Tim Thornhill and Paul Dolan, operates with high standards and broad eco-practices: carbon neutrality, use of 100 percent green power, certified sustainable farming practices, support of local family farms and the Mendocino community, water reduction, reuse and recycling programs and earth-friendly packaging.

Hybrid 4-day school week approved for WHS



By Kathryn Reed

ZEPHYR COVE – Whittell High School's four-day school week is almost exactly how Principal Sue Shannon wants to leave it for her successor starting in the fall.

The only thing the school board didn't agree to on Tuesday afternoon was to put the snow days on Fridays in April or May instead of tacking them onto the end of the school year.

Douglas County school board member Randy Green pulled the item from the consent agenda so he could get some clarification as to why staff was recommending this. He called the make-up days "educationally useless" when they are in June.

Assistant Superintendent Rich Alexander explained it was necessary to have the snow days at the end of the school calendar because Whittell and Zephyr Cove Elementary share staff for physical education, art and music. Contractually with teachers it would not work to have two make-up days for one snow day.

Board member Cindy Trigg said she would like to see the district move in the direction to have Whittell's snow days incorporated into the school year instead of extending the school year. She said this would be better for AP testing as well not extending the school year.

What the board did approve 6-0, with Keith Roman absent, was a hybrid schedule for 2010-11. Next school year will be the second year of the pilot four-day week. The major change is having students go to class on Fridays during weeks when there is a holiday so instruction is still given four days.

For more information about the Zephyr Cove school’s four-day school week, click here.

Tahoe Maritime Museum fundraiser

“Launch Into Summer” celebration and fundraiser is May 29 at 5pm at the Tahoe Maritime Museum in Homewood. Festivities will include wine, hors d’oeuvres and a cruising auction with limited items offering unique experiences.

Cost is $65 per person. Email info@tahoemaritime.org by May 15 to RSVP.

Soroptimist says thanks to Elegant Evening supporters

To the community,

The 2010 Elegant Evening at Harrah’s was quite a success and that was due, in the most part, to the generosity of businesses and friends in our community.

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra wishes to thank everyone who attended this fun and worthwhile event and also those who donated to make it so profitable for the programs and organizations that we as a group support. As always, every dollar raised goes back into our town, schools, and students

that are recipients.

Our event was well-attended and beautifully decorated thanks to the generosity of Harrah’s and their fabulous staff and the delicious food. A special kudo to Paul Ellbogen, Paul Voss, Robin Eissinger, Linda Hunt and banquet/catering staffs for their hard work and monetary assistance. The following businesses and supporters were patrons of our 2010 Elegant Evening:



Elegant
Evening 2010

A Massage at Tahoe, A Massage for all Seasons, A Frame of Mind, AC Stephan & Diane Johnson, Acacia Winery, Ace Hardware of SLT, Acqua Hair Design, Advanced Cosmetic Dermatology, Allasia Creations, Alpen Sierra Coffee Co., Alpina Café, Alpine Realty & Rentals, Alpine Clothing Co., Altitude Salon, Amador Flower Farm, American Red Cross, Angel Touch, Angie’s Signs, Anytime Fitness, Aquilina Hardwood Floors, Aspen Hollow, Balanced Fitness, Balancing Your Business, Barbara Gustafson, Barton Health, Bert’s Cafe, Betsy & John Williams, Bike Habitat, Black Bear Inn, Bleu Wave, Blue Water Bistro, Body Essentials, Bonita Paulis Fine Art , Boy Scouts, Brian Shinault Architect, Brothers Burrito, Burger Lounge, Cafe’ Fiore, Carol Taylor, Carson Valley Inn, Carson Oak Outlet, Cathy Huffman, Cedarville Winery, Celeste Eckerman, DDS, Chevy’s, Cilantro’s, Cindy Shinault, Cindy Cowen, City of SLT Rec Dept., Cookie & Paul Rork, Cork & More, Costco, Crossfit Lake Tahoe, Curves, Dancing Deer, David Wally’s, Deerfield Lodge, Dennis Nelson, Deep Lake Design, Diane Ross, Dick’s

Fuller O’Brien Paints, Dirk Yuricich Photography, Dog Dog Cat, Dollar Signs and Graphics, Doris Groelz, Dorothy Davis, Dr. Seljesta, Eagle Valley Golf Course, Ed Cook Tree Service, El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office, El Dorado Hotel & Casino, El Dorado Savings, Eloise Automotive, Embassy Suites Lake Tahoe, Emery Financial, Eric Linkugel, Ernie’s Coffee Shop, Evelyn Yonker, Farah Richmond, Fat City Food Co., Flower Farm Inn, Forever Dance Ballroom, Freshies, Genasci and Stigers Dental, Genoa Lakes Golf Club, Getaway Café, Gold Store, Grassroots Natural Food, Grocery Outlet, H2O Sports, Hampton Inn & Suites, Harrah*s/Harveys, Heaven Scent, Home Depot, Hot Gossip, Hot Locks, Hot Cha Cha, House of Ski, Hunan Gardens, Inn by the Lake, Irene Radford, Jazzercise, Jeff Chamberlain, DDS, Joanne Wood, JoAnn Conner – Independent Associate Prepaid Legal, Joanne Shope, Joe Benigno’s Tree Service, John & Roxie Upton, Julie Nelson, K9 Bliss Dog Behavioral, Kahle Community Center, Kalani’s, Katharine Miller, Kathay Lovell, Kathy Angel-Forte, Kevin J. Cassidy, DDS, Keys Café, Kingsbury Automotive, KOWL/KRLT radio, Kragan Auto, KTHO radio, Lake Tahoe Golf Course, Lake Tahoe Master Framing, Lake Tahoe News, Lake Valley Fire Department, Lake Tahoe Chinese Buffet, Lake Tahoe Holidays, Lake Tahoe Cruises, Lakeland Village Resort, Lakeside Inn & Casino, Laurie Brazil, Les Schwab Tire Center, Linda LaFavor-Coyle- Beauti-Control, Lisa Huard, Lucille Holmlund, Lydia Rogers, Lynn Corey, Maria Martinez, Marilyn Pawling, Mary Kay Consultant Laticia Hansen, Maren Taylor and Eric Linkugel, Maureen & Bradley Senn, Micshell Riley Sculpture, Midkiff & Associates, Mind/Body Fitness, Mirabelle French Cuisine, Mo’s Place, Mountain News, Mountain Postal, Hair & Nail Studio, Nails by Lillian, Naked Fish, Nancy & Ken Rollston, Nancy Gayner-CMT, Napa Inn, Nel’s Hardware, Nephele’s, New York Pizza, New Day Nail & Hair, Off the Hook, Orchid’s, Overland Meat, Pam Brekas Originals, Passeretti’s, Pat Papp, Patagonia, Peter Darvas, Picchetti Winery, Pottery by Lynn, ProClean Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning, Red Hut Cafe, Redwood Printing, Riva Grill, Robert Mancinelli, Rojo’s, Ross Groelz, DDS, RSN, Safeway Round Hill, Sage & Thymely

Solutions, Inc., Savvy, Scott Mason, Scotty's Hardware, Scusa!, Sessions Salon, Shari Young, Sherna Kopple-Svensson, Sidestreet Boutique, Sierra Athletic Club, Sierra Nevada Backflow, Sierra Windows and Doors, Signs of Tahoe, Ski Run Boat Co,. Skin & Hair Wellness Center, SLT Police Department, SLT Fire Department, Soaring NV, Sorenson's Resort, Soroptimist International of SLT, South Y Fireplace, Sprouts, Staples, Stateline Brewery, Steamers Bar & Grill, Steve Cress, Studio 6 Hair Design, Sugar Pine Bakery, Sunridge Golf Course, Susan Welsh, Sushi Pier, Svadhyyaya Yoga, Svensson's Workshop, Tahoe Business Monitor, Tahoe Health Touch, Tahoe Daily Tribune, Tahoe Cakes by Grace, Tahoe Family Dentists, Tahoe Ridge Winery, Tahoe Grille, Tahoe Lakeshore Lodge & Spa, Tahoe Keys Deli, Tahoe Sports LTD, Tahoe Paradise Golf Course, Tahoe Season's Resort, Tahoe Valley Pharmacy, Tahoe One Hour Cleaners, Tahoe Carpet Care, Tahoe Fly Fishing Outfitters, Tahoe Tutor, Tahoe Donut, Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District, Tep's Villa Roma, Thai One On, The Sportsman, The Glass Doctor, The Adolescent Mind, Thran's Flowers, Thrifty Hippy Store, Thunderbird Lodge Preservation Society, Tolman & Co. Jewelers, Weddings A-Go-Go, Wendy David, Western Highland Mortgage Co., Wildman Café, Wolfgang Puck, Zephyr Cove Restaurant.

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra

Tourism conference in South Lake Tahoe

The Tahoe Tourism "Your Town Forum" will provide South Shore businesses an opportunity to hear from tourism experts all about what's new for summer. The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority

will preview its strategic plan and unveil the 2010 summer marketing campaign. Representatives from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Sierra Business Council will talk about Geotourism – what it is and why it matters.

Attendees will also learn about the California Welcome Center in El Dorado County and hear presentations on new events in Lake Tahoe, including Lake Tahoe Restaurant Week, Hot August Nights and Iron Girl.

Guest speakers include Pettit Gilwee from California Travel and Tourism Commission, Debbie Manning from El Dorado Hills Chamber of Commerce, Bruce Walters from Hot August Nights, Bob Kingman from Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Nicole DeJonghe from Sierra Business Council, Duncan/Channon Agency, B Gorman from the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce and Carol Chaplin and Mike Frye from LTVA.

The April 29 event from 9-11am is free and open to the public. It is at Lake Tahoe Community College's Duke Theater in South Lake Tahoe.

For more information, call (775) 588.1728.

Green pioneer speaks at SNC

Green pioneer Ben Solomon moderates a discussion on clean energy innovation with Jim Croce, the president and CEO of the Nevada Institute for Renewable Energy Commercialization, on April 29 at 7pm at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, Room 139.

They will explore how clean energy can contribute to economic growth and diversification. Croce will discuss the

interrelation of education, sustainable technology development and deployment, and Nevada's future prosperity. He will also provide insight into NIREC's role in accelerating the commercialization of clean-energy technologies.

This ongoing series is a concept that grew out of the Seniors Conversation Café and represents a partnership between Sierra Nevada College and the IVGID Senior Programs.

Prior to the talk, staffers from the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center will be offering a tour at 6:30pm that will highlight the sustainable features of the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, the first LEED Platinum-certified building in Nevada.

A representative from Sierra Nevada College will also share news about the campus's application for Sustainable Campus Initiative funding spanning teaching, research, and certification related to renewable energy that will make SNC the only sustainable green campus in Nevada.

For more information, contact Debi Noonan at (775) 831.1314, ext. 7420 or dnoonan@sierranevada.edu.

Fundraiser at Apres Wine Company

Join Court Appointed Special Advocates, South Lake Tahoe Women's Center and Tahoe Youth and Family Services at Après Wine Company on April 23 for a fundraiser benefiting these nonprofits.

Ten percent of all purchases of wine, food, bottled wine and

gifts will go to the three South Lake Tahoe organizations.

For more information, visit www.apreswineco.com or call Kelly at (530) 573.3072.

STPUD schedules hearing on rate hike

South Tahoe Public Utility District is having a public hearing on May 6 at 6pm regarding its proposed 4 percent rate hike that would take effect July 1.

The meeting is at 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

Written comments may be sent to the above address, attention Customer Service Manager.

Mt. Rose Highway closed part of this week

By Lenita Powers, Reno Gazette-Journal

A portion of the Mount Rose Highway is scheduled to be closed to traffic through Thursday from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. to allow construction on a bridge, Nevada Department of Transportation

spokesman Scott Magruder said.

The section of Mount Rose Highway beneath the Interstate 580 bridge will be closed to allow workers to put up temporary supporting structures used to erect bridges, he said.

“They don’t want to do that over traffic, so we’re closing the portion of the highway beneath the bridge,” Magruder said.

Read the whole story