Lakeview Commons – battle rages on over lease, name

By Kathryn Reed

Does the landowner or the lessee have the right to name a piece of property?

That is the fundamental question as to what the name of Lakeview Commons in South Lake Tahoe will permanently be called.

City officials believe the name is fine based on the decision earlier this month not to sit with county officials to discuss the name.



Ever since the county leased this land to South Lake Tahoe the two government bodies have been squabbling. Photo/Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County officials on Tuesday spent considerable time discussing the whole area, which includes both sides of

Highway 50. The entire area is loosely called the 56-acre project because that is how large the area is.

Phase one of two for the waterfront area is what is called Lakeview Commons. But at issue is how it got the name, whether it was a working name and who gets to have final say regarding the name.

Supervisor Norma Santiago gave a history about the area, which goes back to the 1920s when longtime families gave the land to the county to be used in perpetuity as open space.

South Lake Tahoe leases the land from the county. Through the years a number of agreements, leases, and memorandums of understanding have been signed between the government bodies.

South Lake Tahoe Assistant City Manager Nancy Kerry spoke on behalf of the city and for the council at the May 8 supervisors' meeting in Placerville.

"It's a false controversy about the name that has been used well over three years," Kerry said. She even pointed out how all the supervisors' documents listed the discussion item as Lakeview Commons.

Santiago, to her board said, "I ask for support for county counsel to work with our facilities group to look at the lease for clarity of what is contained in the lease in regards to any aspects of what happens on this property."

On the May 15 council agenda is an item to possibly appoint a subcommittee for review of the lease agreement at El Dorado Beach-Lakeview Commons.

Supervisor Jack Sweeney has records dating to 1968 that he cited, where the land is called South Lake Tahoe-El Dorado Recreation Area. That name was what was used on working documents as the 56-acre project got under way until it morphed into Lakeview Commons.

Supervisor Ron Briggs said, “I never once thought we approved Lakeview Commons.”

Keeping it named El Dorado Beach, as the area was known before the $6 million renovation of the site, is what the majority of the supervisors want.

Supervisors Sweeney and Santiago were appointed to the El Dorado Beach ad hoc committee to look into the lease and work with the city.

The board will have its annual Tahoe meeting June 25. At that time a report to the board about the lease would likely be made.

However, on June 20 is the dedication by the city of Lakeview Commons.

Supervisors said a plaque can always be replaced if the name on it should be changed. The city has ordered the plaque. It says Lakeview Commons at El Dorado Beach.

Kerry mentioned how every City Council member who ever had anything to do with the project has a right to their name on the plaque. Plus, state reps, including a slew from California Tahoe Conservancy – the agency that funde the renovation – will be on the plaque.

The supes want the people of El Dorado County to be on the plaque and not their names or any other electeds. There was a little discussion about the order of the words, at which time Sweeney made a homosexual slur which can be heard at the very end of the video from this agenda item.

Ski industry trying to forget about 2011-12 season

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

SAN ANTONIO – In the worst ski season in 20 years, the winners stayed flat and the losers lost big.

“I think we dodged a bullet,” said Dave Riley , chief of Telluride ski area, where visitation remained steady through the 2011-12 season while nationally visits fell 16 percent to 51 million, a 20-year low.

Telluride joins a handful of Colorado ski areas – like Eldora, Wolf Creek, Echo Mountain, Durango Mountain Resort and Aspen Skiing Co.’s quiver of four hills – that saw visitation remain similar to the record season of 2010-11. Wyoming and New Mexico – home to the thriving Taos Ski Valley – were the only states to show annual increases in visitation. Overall, the Rocky Mountain region, which includes Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Idaho, Wyoming and Montana, bested the national 16-percent decline with a mere 7.2 percent drop to 19.4 million visits. Resorts in California were on the other end, with visits plummeting more than 20 percent in a season that saw a first-ever snowless December.



Heavenly's parking lot was full on the few powder days Tahoe witnessed. Photo/LTN

The mood at the annual National Ski Areas Association convention – a typically celebratory confab of several hundred resort operators from all snowy corners – was not the same as recent gatherings, where resorts reveled in record showings despite economic turmoil.

Recovery and resiliency reigned at this year's rally of goggle-tanned optimists.

"We are eternally optimistic. We see an anomaly winter and we know it's going to get better next year," said Steve Rice , the managing director of Florida's CNL Lifestyle Co., a real estate investment trust with 16 ski resorts and seven ski-area villages . "Still, I don't think it's hyperbole to say that this year's silver lining is that it demonstrates a worst-case scenario. We know what the bottom looks like."

Indeed, it would be hard to get any worse.

Read the whole story

USFS to work on Camp Rich area bike trail

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will begin work to repair the Pope-Baldwin Bike Path on May 14. This 3-mile stretch is better known at the Camp Richardson trail.

Work will include fixing cracks and holes and eliminating bumps. he repair project is intended to improve safety and accessibility, while increasing the trail's lifespan.



Improvements coming to bike trail near Camp Richardson. Photo/LTN file

For safety purposes, portions of the bike path will be closed during construction activities and at times pedestrian/bike traffic will be rerouted through detours on native surfaces. Detours will be clearly marked and Forest Service staff will direct traffic in some areas. Some delays will be possible.

No construction activities will occur during weekends beginning Fridays at 1pm until 7am Mondays. During Memorial Day weekend construction activities will stop on Thursday at 1pm and resume on Tuesday at 7am.

The project is expected to be finished before the Fourth of July.

For more information, contact the Forest Service at (530) 543.2694.

Yacht club will train people to race

Beer Can Races are about to return to Lake Tahoe every Wednesday at 6pm throughout the summer.

Want to learn how to race?

There will be an intro to sailboat racing seminar on May 19 from 2:30-5:30pm out of the Tahoe Keys Marina in South Lake Tahoe.

Sign up by emailing ltwyc2@aol.com.

No need to own a sailboat to be a member of the Lake Tahoe Windjammers Yacht Club.

Opinion: Discrimination alive

and shameful on Tahoe fields

By Kathryn Reed

Walk onto a tennis court or dive into a swimming pool – it doesn't matter what sex you are. The net is the same height, the lines spaced the same; 50 meters is 50 meters.

Walk onto a boys' baseball field and girls' softball field – the differences are noticeable because of the pitchers' mound and the distance between the bases.



Who cares?

No one, probably, when it comes to just these differences.

Who cares about the balance of opportunities offered the two genders as well as the quality of facilities?

A whole heck of a lot of people.

Title IX makes people care, or at least pay attention to potential and real differences, even when they don't want to. The same goes for California Assembly Bill 2404.

> *No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.*

That's what Title IX, the landmark law signed by President Richard Nixon on June 23, 1972, says.

Personal impact

I had just finished first grade when the president signed that law which will be 40-years-old next month. I knew who Nixon was. I was living just outside of Washington, D.C., that year – even went to his inauguration the following January. But I didn't know what Title IX was. I don't know when I first knew about it.



The Babe Ruth field where the STHS boys' varsity team plays comes with an announcers' booth, snack shack and ample seating for spectators. Photos/Kathryn Reed

While Title IX was about making educational opportunities equal for both sexes, its lasting impact when people talk about the law is how it leveled the playing field for boys and girls, men and women.

I'd like to think it didn't have much impact on my life. I played all the sports I wanted to – still do. Maybe it's because I had three older sisters and therefore didn't see any potential discrimination without having a brother.

My guess, though, is plenty of things weren't fair. I played softball as a third-grader. We were called the Fireflies. I swam competitively for years in AAU, having competed in the Far Western Nationals. I played a year of JV softball. I lettered in tennis all four years in high school. I even

played a year of college tennis.

Title IX opened doors that were previously dead-bolted shut to girls. Last year, according to the Women's Sports Foundation, 3,173,549 girls played a sport in high school. Forty years ago that number was 294,015. Other reports show 1 in 27 girls played a sport pre-Title IX and now 2 in 5 participate. The number of female college athletes has increased by 500 percent in the last 40 years, another report says.

I've played softball on some of the fields in Tahoe. A co-ed team practiced at Sierra House Elementary. I'm so glad none of my employees twisted or broke an ankle. It was and still is a scary place to run. And the way the ball skips – well, that would be comical if it weren't scary as well.

We played our games at the softball field by the middle school.



The softball field under construction at STHS.

I also played on a women's team at Zephyr Cove. Much better facilities in Nevada.

As for tennis on the South Shore – well, the treatment of non-revenue generating sports is worth another column, as is a private operator making money off the high school courts.

But then again, private entities making money off taxpayer built facilities is the norm around here – whether it's the

city or school district allowing it.

Reality check

With numbers like those presented above the easy conclusion is Title IX has done its job.

Not so fast.

AB2404’s passage in 2005 would not have been necessary if all were fair on the playing fields in the Golden State. The law came into being after a group in Los Angeles fought to have city recreation facilities for each gender be the same quality.



The snack cart the girls get to use.

The inequality of playing fields in South Lake Tahoe has long been a contentious issue. Ask anyone who has played softball or whose child has and they shake their head. They are dismayed about the substantial inequities in the fields in town and embarrassed when playing off the hill and seeing what other towns have.

“Most communities have convertible fields. That is how they are doing it in modern times, but South Lake Tahoe is not in modern times,” Marilyn Breisacher told Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe when she spoke to the group May 9.

Breisacher was there to talk about Title IX and AB2404 as someone who has been involved with softball for the past 10 years. But she is also on the Fields Advisory Committee for the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority. The committee was formed to make recommendations to the three-member JPA board about how to spend the $500,000 it has that came from turning Measure S into Measure R.

The other members of the committee are:

• Chuck Leonard: committee chair, also chair of the Community Athletic Coordinating Council.

• John Dalton: experience includes soccer coach and Little League.

• Brian Hogan: experience includes Little League, soccer, softball.

• Steve Noll: experience includes Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition, softball, baseball, soccer, fields design.

• Ken Riegal: experience includes CAAC board member, soccer.

• Steve Weiss: former South Lake Tahoe recreation director.

At the April 30 meeting of this committee the agenda item titled “Equity of facilities issue: Review and discuss city attorney’s office opinion on requirements of AB2404 and Title IX as it applies to Measure R funds” was tabled. Presumably it will be discussed at the May 21 4-6pm meeting at Lake Tahoe Airport.

Issues to be resolved include, but are not limited to:

• Whether the half million dollars allocated via Measure R for ball field improvements can go to baseball fields and not softball fields.

• Whether girls’ playing fields would all need to be brought

up to the same standard as the boys' fields before boys' facilities get a dime.

• Is AB2404 relevant when it comes to spending this money?

• Who has jurisdiction when the fields mostly belong to Lake Tahoe Unified School District, are maintained by the city of South Lake Tahoe, but private money has been used to put in infrastructure like the snack shack at the Babe Ruth fields on Lyons Avenue? With federal money being involved with the district, Title IX becomes an issue. With the city having teams play on the fields and doing the upkeep, it becomes an AB2404 issue. With boys' baseball dads raising the money and doing the work on upgrades, it becomes a turf war in multiple definitions of that phrase.

Discrimination on the diamond

Have someone who knows the fields take you on a tour. To the uneducated, it's hard to see the true differences.

Go to the fields on Lyons Avenue by South Tahoe Middle School. To the left is where the boys play. It has a grass infield – just like Big League parks have. Plenty of seating is available for spectators. A large announcers' booth and snack shack are there.

Look to the right. That's the softball field. It has a dirt infield. Seating? Keep looking. Announcers' booth? No. Ability to share the snack shack? On rare occasions, during tournaments, if a fee is paid to Babe Ruth.

A field is being built at South Tahoe High School for softball. Remember, this is 40 years after Title IX was signed by the president of the United States (clearly not united genders) of America.

The dugouts are in, as is the announcers' booth. But school district officials are scrambling to make the field not be an

embarrassment. Steve Morales, facilities director for the district, at the April 30 fields committee meeting said bleachers would be put in in front of the announcers' booth.

This will allow fans to see action down the first and third baselines. No one sitting to the right of home plate behind the fence and parallel to the dugouts will be able to know if the runner is safe or out at first.

But when the bleachers behind home are in, how will the announcer be able to relay what is going on or the scorekeeper to rule on a play? Another quandary in the world of ball fields in South Lake Tahoe.

JV boys are allowed to play on girls' fields, but girls may not play on boys' fields – at least in South Lake Tahoe.

Boys' fields come with batting cages – even bathrooms. The girls, well, they don't have equal amenities.

Bigger picture missing

In having attended part of the last fields committee meeting before going to another assignment, I witnessed democracy and open meeting decorum close to the worst I've seen.

Leonard, the chair of the committee, clearly has no sense of how to run a meeting. Committee members were allowed to speak at the same time – therefore over each other. How John Upton, the lone paid staff member of the JPA board, could take notes is beyond me. I couldn't follow the multiple conversations.

These meetings are supposed to follow the Brown Act – California's open meeting law. Upton, a former elected official to multiple boards, could have kept the gang in check.

It was clearly the men against the woman. I don't know how many times I heard the guys tell the gal – go raise money and you can have a better field. Neanderthals is the word that

came to mind while listening in disbelief to their diatribe.

Do they have a wife, a daughter, a sister, a mother who would want to play on the same quality field as the males in the family?

Each of the committee members seems to have his or her own turf to protect, with little consideration given to what's best for the greater good of the community. It would have seemed better for the JPA board to appoint people who didn't have a horse in the race.

A true assessment of the fields and the inventory needs to be done – not Weiss walking around the grounds and reporting back. The committee needs to know what it costs to upkeep each field and what it would cost to improve it. The committee needs to know what kind of money is generated from as well as what the potential income from the fields is.

Why is there no discussion of leveraging the half million dollars into bigger bucks either through going after grants, seeking partnerships or even getting corporate naming rights to a field?

Why isn't there discussion of how best to spend the people's money so the people get the biggest bang for their buck?

The $500,000 is taxpayer money.

Measure S dollars were audited once by the county auditor-controller. They can be again.

Measure R committees set summer meeting schedule

The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority Bicycle and Fields Advisory Committees, required by Measure R, have established their meeting schedules for May, June, and July.

These meetings are being conducted in preparation for making recommendations to the JPA at its regular meeting in July.

The meetings are open to the public.

The Fields Advisory Committee will meet as follows:

May 21, 4–6pm, City Council Chambers, Lake Tahoe Airport.

June 25, 4–6pm, Downstairs Conference Room, Lake Tahoe Airport.

July 16, 4–6pm, City Council Chambers, Lake Tahoe Airport.

The Bicycle Advisory Committee will meet as follows:

June 8, 9–11am, Downstairs Conference Room, Lake Tahoe Airport. (Note that this meeting was earlier scheduled for June 1, and has been changed.)

July 12, 9– 1am, Downstairs Conference Room, Lake Tahoe Airport.

For further information, John Upton at (530) 541.0525 or rkupton@aol.com.

Proposals in the works to keep California parks open

By Torey Van Oot, Sacramento Bee

Democratic Sens. Joe Simitian and Noreen Evans have rolled out a proposal aimed at keeping gates open at more than 50 California state parks set to close this summer.

The proposal, which will be heard by a Senate budget subcommittee this afternoon, includes shifting as much as $40 million from existing accounts for road maintenance, septic system repairs and trails and off-highway vehicle funds to cover parks' costs.

Other recommendations include facilitating operating agreements with nonprofits, improving entry fee collection and exploring other funding.

State parks officials announced last year that 70 of the state's 278 parks would be closed, projected to save about $22 million. The department has been able to form partnerships with nonprofits and local governments to keep 16 of those parks open. Richard Stapler, spokesman for Natural Resources Secretary John Laird, said officials are involved in talks involving about a dozen more parks.

Read the whole story

Solar eclipse will be visible in Lake Tahoe

The first solar eclipse since 1994 is coming May 20. And the West will be one of the best places to see the moon covering the sun.

The Fleischmann Planetarium in Reno is having a viewing that night. For more details, go online.

But the event in the sky should be visible from most Lake Tahoe backyards between 6:28-6:33pm that Sunday.

Genoa trail system to open next weekend

The grand opening of the 16-mile Genoa Trail System is May 12 from 10-11am.

This free event is at the Eagle Ridge Trailhead, located near the green water tank, about 1.8 miles north of Genoa off of Jacks Valley Road on Eagle Ridge Road.

Carson Valley Trails Association member Jeremy Vlcan will brief guests about the new trails.

Informational displays and maps will be available. After the

briefing, guests are invited to participate in a 4-mile guided hike from Eagle Ridge to Sierra Canyon.

The Genoa Trail System was funded by a Nevada Division of State Lands Question 1 grant.

For more information, go online.

Truckee area horse camp has classes for all abilities, ages

This summer, Piping Rock's equestrian camp will give children the opportunity to connect with horses and nature under the supervision of a CHA certified trainer. The instruction at Piping Rock Equestrian Center develops a comprehensive understanding of horses through an array of unmounted activities, including grooming, hoof care and lunging.



Camp sessions will be offered in one week increments from June 18 through Aug. 24.

For more information about camp levels, session times, and enrollment fees go online or call (530) 582.6780.