

Do It Center coming to South Tahoe



Do It Center will soon occupy the old South Shore Motors building in South Tahoe.

By Kathryn Reed

The Do It Center did it.

South Lake Tahoe officials issued the permit Monday for the old South Shore Motors building on Lake Tahoe Boulevard to become a general merchandise-nursery.

A special use permit is not required for this type of business.

In the permit it says, "A condition of approval is included that requires the DIY Center to maintain this variety of merchandise and not evolve over time in to a store that would be defined under a different use."

Do It Center President Jess Ruf had wanted to be much more – just like his other locations scattered throughout California. Ruf was not available for comment Monday night.

Ruf signed a 10-year lease on the building in December.

Do It Center's approval from the Planning Commission was appealed by Robert Cosmi, whose family has owned Scotty's Hardware for 40 years. The council sided with Cosmi in June by denying the special use permit that was required if Ruf were to carry the more extensive inventory. Since that time Ruf and his backers have been working to reconfigure the business model to fit the 18,792-square-foot site.

What neighboring businesses are upset about is oversaturating the market with the same type of merchandise. Besides Scotty's, Ace Hardware and Kmart's home center are within walking distance. There are myriad other businesses on the South Shore that carry similar stock that Do It Center is likely to have on its shelves.

Cosmi on Monday night said he wasn't surprised about the permit. Still, his intention is to file an appeal within the five-day window that he and anyone else has.

"What, they drop lumber and it becomes a totally different store?" Cosmi said. "Most of the gentleman's suppliers are mine."

Twenty-five to 30 percent of the store is expected to be devoted to nursery items and 10 to 15 percent will be seasonal items. The remaining categories include lighting-electrical, paint, hardware, plumbing, cleaning supplies, small appliances, storage-home decor, clothing, auto, pet, sundries, pool-spa supplies, and a display of large appliances that can be ordered.

Plans call for overhauling the outdated facade with a cleaner, more contemporary look. The parking lot will be reconfigured so traffic flow is better.

The permit says, "The applicant is proposing to remove existing windows and much of the glass on the front and sides

of the building. The plan proposes to fill in the space for the windows and doors on the sides of the building with siding and CMU block wainscot to match the existing building.”

Cosmi said he plans to talk to Nel’s and Meeks today. He also plans to contact the National Hardware Association.