

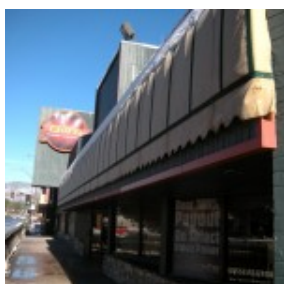
Potential buyer wants to turn Bill's into strip club

By Kathryn Reed

A strip club. That's what Bill's Casino may become.

Potential proprietor Mike Laub and Douglas County Sheriff Ron Pierini met Monday to discuss the idea. The sheriff's department issues alcohol and adult entertainment licenses. But it's the county commissioners who first must approve the licenses.

When Laub tried to open a strip club a few years ago at the bottom of Kingsbury Grade in the old Faces and Tahoe Underground building, the commission denied him.



Bill's may become a strip club.

The commissioners then rewrote the ordinance dictating where these types of businesses are allowed. The only place on the South Shore of Douglas County a strip club is allowed is along the casino corridor "right where Laub wants his club.

Not even Las Vegas has strip clubs on its Strip.

Laub did not return phone calls. He is an attorney on the South Shore. He used to own Brothers Bar on Emerald Bay Road.

Pierini told *Lake Tahoe News* that Laub is thinking about buying the two-story building from Harrah's Entertainment to have part of it be a strip club and part shops.

This can be a busy area with families walking by. Across the street is a movie theater at the Horizon. Restaurants and showrooms in the adjacent and nearby casinos all cater to children.

"They wanted to see what the pleasure of the county would be because of the investment possibility," Pierini said.

Laub essentially wants the OK from the county to do this before he makes a deal with Harrah's, otherwise he could end up owning a building without a business to operate.

Douglas County Commission Chairwoman Nancy McDermid did not want to discuss the matter at this time.

The commission would need more than public outcry as a reason to deny the permit. However, entertainment licenses are hard to get. All employees have to have work cards and have background checks, plus other requirements.

Pierini believes Laub and the district attorney need to talk about Laub's business proposal.

"The only opinion I will give, and I told Mr. Laub this, is I won't give my personal opinion, but I can say it will increase calls of service," Pierini said.

Pierini was captain at the Tahoe substation when a strip club was in the old Nugget building in the 1990s. It has since been subdivided and houses restaurants and other businesses east of the casino corridor.

That club didn't last long.

"Typically when you deal with strip clubs the problem is intoxication and disturbance of the peace with fights,"

Pierini said.

John Packer, spokesman for Harrah's Northern Nevada, said the company doesn't expect to decide until later this month or February whether to sell or lease the property.

"The only decision that was made was to close Bill's on Jan. 4," Packer said.

But he added, "Harrah's is not in the real estate business."

Harrah's is in the gaming business. It owns Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys at Stateline.

Packer would not comment on how a strip club might affect his business.

Others are more vocal about their thoughts.

"I think the location is not appropriate for it," Carol Chaplin, executive director of Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, said. "I would hope that is not the direction that our destination aspires to."

Although the strip club would be across the state line, the South Shore tries to be one community.

"When we say 'America's All-Year Playground,' that is not what we had in mind," South Lake Tahoe Mayor Kathay Lovell said.