

Confusing bid documents delay Lakeview Commons project

By Kathryn Reed

Convoluting bid documents sent out by South Lake Tahoe officials are delaying construction of Lakeview Commons by more than a month. The soonest work at El Dorado Beach could begin is Aug. 16.

Lakeview Commons is the name of what had been called the 56-acre project. The plan is to revitalize the entire area on both sides of Highway 50, with work on the lake side the priority and the only portion that money has been secured for.



The retaining wall above El Dorado Beach is collapsing.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

“I looked at the bid documents and there is serious ambiguity,” City Attorney Patrick Enright told the City Council on Tuesday. “We will try to go with a cleaner bid so we know what is in each line item.”

The city thought it had a contractor lined up, but when it came time to draw up a contract confusion arose as to what exactly was expected.

The council voted 4-0, with Councilman Hal Cole absent, to reject the four bids that were received and to start all over.

BJ Sullivan, president of Clark & Sullivan, said it wasn't fair to his company to start from scratch.

"If I wasn't the low bidder, I'd think it was a good idea to rebid the job also," Sullivan said. "It's a relatively simple job. I feel it's unfair you rebid the job because they will know our numbers."

The company's attorney, Pat Markham, also addressed the council. His contention is the letter of intent from the city for his client to be the contractor on the multi-million project should be binding. To this, Enright said, only action from the council is binding.

Enright's concern with going forward with the current bid documents is the wording is apt to leave the city and any contractor disputing for years the intent of the language used. The inability to draw up a workable contract is what led him to this conclusion.

Jim Marino, assistant engineer for the city, said the plan for the next set of bid documents to be more clear on what is expected to be built, with other parts of the project listed as add-ons. The two primary concerns are fixing the hazardous retaining wall and building the boathouse.

The dilapidated wall is what pushed the project to the forefront when it came time for the California Tahoe Conservancy to secure state bond dollars for the project.

Although that money is still on its way to the South Shore from Sacramento, everyone associated with the \$6 million believes it will arrive within 10 days.

Peter Eichar, who has been spearheading the project for the CTC, told *Lake Tahoe News* all the paperwork has been sent to

Sacramento.

"This project really has some great potential. Maybe this is the start of something big. We are due for something around here," Eichar said.

It's possible the boathouse could be erected to meet the Oct. 15 grading deadline and then have the interior worked on over the winter. The boathouse will be used for non-motorized watercraft storage.

The project was always expected to take two building seasons. The delay means less gets accomplished this summer and more will be done in 2011.

Add-ons to the project that could get done next year include the cantilever walkway at the east end of the project.

When the project does go back out to bid the city's Public Works Department would like to incorporate the city's ordinance giving preference to local contractors.

The council on June 22 delayed first reading of the ordinance until the July 13 meeting to incorporate additional language into the document. It's likely everything will be in place so Lakeview Commons would be the first project to use the local contractor preference mandate.