

Developer sets record straight about Homewood

Publisher's note: *The Sacramento Bee article was reprinted in Lake Tahoe News on July 7, 2010.*

Dear Publisher,

On July 4th, the *Sac Bee* published an opinion piece written by Mr. Tom Rosenberg entitled "Mega-resort could harm Tahoe". The viewpoint was unfortunately filled with factual error. Please note that on April 6, 2010, JMA Ventures [owner of Homewood Mountain Resort] met at length with Mr. Rosenberg at Homewood as Mr. Rosenberg had made it clear that he wanted to get his facts straight.

The article states that Tahoe's West Shore consists of single-family homes and extends from about 15 miles south of Tahoe city to Rubicon Bay. The article fails to mention that the West Shore is also home to a number of commercial businesses, hotels, restaurants, marinas, two ski resorts [Granlibakken & Homewood Mountain Resort] and other resort properties, grocers, a museum, a post office, a community center, etc. all served from a major state highway. Also worth noting is that the majority of single family homes on the West Shore are second, vacation homes.

Mr. Rosenberg's column references a 700-acre planned development at Chambers Landing on the West Shore in the 1960s by the Perini Corporation and attempts to draw a direct parallel between the Perini plan and the Homewood ski area master plan. A critical, key difference that Mr. Rosenberg neglected to note was that the Perini development was planned on raw, previously undeveloped land.

The Homewood plan is primarily a redevelopment of the two existing base areas, which are currently covered with asphalt

parking and existing ski related facilities.

Mr. Rosenberg labels the Homewood ski lodge a "high rise". The Homewood master plan includes a total of six mixed use buildings at the existing north base area and three residential buildings at the south base. Four of the six north base buildings are two stories in height while the other two, which include the lodge/hotel and day skier facility, are four stories tall. The two-story structures are located along the state highway whereas the four story buildings are set back over 250 feet from the highway. The south base buildings are all two and three story in height. The day lodge at the mid-mountain is predominantly a single story structure.

The article incorrectly states that there will be 405 condos and transient accommodations. In fact, the Homewood master plan includes 241 residential units plus a 75-room hotel to be built in phases over time. In addition, the master plan provides for 13 workforce housing apartments. The article cites a "commercial center", leading one to believe that some kind of mall or shopping center is planned. The proposed Homewood plan includes 15,000 square feet of retail space designed for three or four neighborhood oriented retail shops including a grocer, an ice cream parlor, and a hardware store.

The article goes on to state that the "developer proposes a clubhouse for condo owners and hotel guests and a 14,000 square foot restaurant on mountain" leading the reader to believe that there will be a private club plus a 14,000 square foot restaurant. In fact, the master plan proposal includes one public day-use lodge with public restroom facilities at a mid-mountain location. Existing mid-mountain shacks and structures will be replaced by the new public day lodge. The proposed facility also includes a public, community swimming pool for use during the summer months.

The article erroneously states that in the future, families will "ski down to an asphalt base, with a proposed lodge far

above existing height limits, and 28 acres of condominiums". The proposed master plan removes the existing base area asphalt parking lots and relocates the majority of parking underground. The existing asphalt parking areas will be replaced by a landscaped pedestrian village with a winter ice skating pond and overnight accommodations. The proposed north base project area consists of 16.4 acres of mixed uses including pedestrian walkways, landscaping, lodging, workforce housing, and the neighborhood retail shops. The south base proposal includes 6.6 acres of land restoration, residential, and the removal of all asphalt parking.

The article also states that the "project threatens water runoff from the Mount Ellis watershed". The Homewood watershed consists of three streams, none of which intersect the proposed north base area or mid-mountain. Only one of the three streams is located within the redevelopment area at the south base. This stream, known as "Homewood" or "Ellis" creek, will have its stream bank restored at the south base as a part of an ongoing land restoration project, which to-date has included over 240,000 square feet of restoration since 2006. Beyond the restoration work completed to-date, the proposed master plan includes an additional 250,000-500,000 square feet of restoration work on mountain and at the base areas; a fact notably missing from the article. Also missing was mention of the \$650K matching grant from the California State Department of Water Resources to Homewood in 2009 to study and implement land restoration methodology designed to help further minimize sediment runoff into the Lake Tahoe watershed.

Mr. Rosenberg claims that the proposed Homewood redevelopment "contradicts sound planning and accepted policy that mandates environmental protection".

Tell that to the U.S. Green Building Council, a leader in the promotion of sustainable building and planning, who officially notified Homewood that the proposed master plan submittal is on course for a Gold Level certification in the Leadership in

Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Neighborhood Development program; a program with emphasis on sound planning principles, environmental protection, and transit/pedestrian oriented master planning.

While it is fully expected and in fact healthy for there to be a divergence of viewpoint about the proposed Homewood master plan, it is highly unfortunate that some, such as Mr. Rosenberg and certain members of the Friends of the West Shore, are resorting to misinformation and distortion of fact to further their agenda.

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