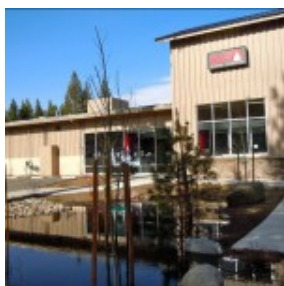


DIY store in South Tahoe granted permit to sell lumber

By Kathryn Reed

Lumber will be able to be bought on a Sunday sometime this summer on the South Shore.

This is because on Thursday afternoon the South Lake Tahoe Planning Commission agreed to DIY's special use permit that would allow the store to sell lumber.



DIY will sell lumber this summer and add 12 parking spaces. The driveway apron will be changed to concrete down the road.

Photo/LTN

The controversial store – at least when it was going through the permit process more than a year ago – expects to start construction on the building that will house the lumber as soon as dirt can be moved May 1. The permits are in hand.

Jordan Haun, manager of the Tahoe Do It Yourself, said

execution of the permits didn't happen because there was no need to have a lumber building when the use permit didn't allow the sale of that product.

When DIY President Jess Ruf signed a 10-year lease on the old South Shore Motors building in December 2008 he believed he would be opening the following summer.

Then the controversy started in 2009 when the Southern California-based chain started to go through the permitting process. Appeals by representatives of Scotty's, Nel's and Meeks led to the City Council approving DIY to operate a general merchandise store, which meant it could not sell lumber. In doing so, the city essentially gave Meeks a monopoly on the sale of lumber on the South Shore. However, Meeks' South Tahoe and Meyers locations close at 4:30pm on weekdays and is not open Sundays – whereas, DIY has longer hours and open both weekend days.

Lew Feldman, attorney for DIY, told planning commissioners April 14, that granting the special use permit will address the leakage of retail sales off the hill by having a one-stop shop that is open on Sundays.

At the time of the multiple public hearings nearly two years ago, Judy Brown spoke out at a meeting saying how DIY should not be allowed to move in – that proximity of similar businesses should be taken into consideration.

Now she is on the Planning Commission. While she acknowledged what she had said in the past, she voted for the special use permit.

“At this point I feel like my hands are tied. It is existing and it's an allowable use,” Brown said.

Robert Cosmi told *Lake Tahoe News* after meeting he does not know if he will appeal the decision. Scotty's Hardware, which he owns, is walking distance from DIY. He has contended all

along that DIY would cut into sales of existing hardware stores.

Ace Hardware, which was on the same street of Scotty's and DIY, went out of business this year, though they said not because of DIY.

South Tahoe codes allow applicants to reapply for special use permits one year after being denied – which is just what DIY did.

In other action at the Planning Commission meeting:

- The group approved the General Plan Update, which now goes before the City Council on May 3 for approval. It will be one of the topics of the council's workshop after its regular meeting on April 19.