

Shuttered South Tahoe hotel may be turned into park

By Kathryn Reed

Edgewood Companies will have the rooms it needs to build a lodge on its Stateline golf course and South Lake Tahoe will have a park to replace a blighted, boarded up hotel.

That's the proposal on the table. The City Council is scheduled to make the final decision when it meets Tuesday at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport.

City Manager Tony O'Rourke and Edgewood's project manager Brandon Hill separately told *Lake Tahoe News* the agreement is an excellent example of a public-private partnership that benefits the South Shore community aesthetically and economically.



The proposed
Bonanza Park.
Rendering/Design
Workshop

What the council has to decide June 7 is if the development rights Edgewood has regarding tourist accommodation units in the city can be transferred to Stateline.

Because the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has set an arbitrary number for how many hotel rooms can ever be built in

the basin, these TAUs are now a commodity. It also means to be able to build something a developer needs to secure the TAUs before permitting would be allowed.

Edgewood is in the process of creating a hotel on its Stateline golf course. It has 194 TAUs in the city limits. One hundred forty-four of those have already been approved for transfer. They come from Redevelopment Area 3, a Ski Run project and the old Colony Inn. The remaining 50 are before the council. They are from the C&M Lodge on Bonanza Avenue.

Edgewood bought that property near the Y (nearest cross street is D Street) in November for \$850,000 with the sole purpose of wanting the TAUs.

O'Rourke said a long-term benefit to the city is the Edgewood Lodge guests – who are expected to be at an income level not often seen on the South Shore – are projected to bring in more than \$2 million in sales tax over a 30-year period.

To sweeten the deal Edgewood is proposing to pay for the demolition of the hotel that still sits on the nearly 1-acre parcel and turn it into a park.



The defunct hotel on Bonanza Avenue may become a park.

Photo/LTN

The company has met with stakeholders, including the city's

Sustainability, Parks and Recreation, and Latino Affairs commissions. Then they went to the neighbors. This area is really a residential area, with apartment complexes and single-family residences.

“We invited over 200 people to the two outreach events in May and over 100 participated in the feedback process. Two-thirds of the participants were actual residents from the Bonanza neighborhood,” Hill said. “The process we used was, with the help of Design Workshop, a very hands-on approach. We sat, we listened, we gathered people around tables and asked them to draw what they would like to see in the park based on the following success factors: a) it would be well used; b) it could be implemented this year; c) it would use sustainable strategies; d) it would be cost-effective to maintain.”

What Edgewood proposes to build is a park that includes a children’s play area, grass play area, picnic pods, half-court basketball court, and a fenced-in dog park area.

The city for a number of years has talked about creating pocket parks so residents have a place within walking distance for gathering and limited recreation. Available land and the cost of creating them have stalled the process.

This would be the first one – and at no cost to the city except for eventual upkeep.

O’Rourke estimates it will cost the city about \$7,000 a year to maintain what is being called Bonanza Park.

Hill expects it to cost his company about \$200,000 to build the park. The plan is start demolition on the hotel as soon as the council gives the go-ahead. The goal is the park will be ready to be used before next winter.

“Upon completion of the park improvements, the land and park improvements will be dedicated or conveyed to the city,” Hill said.