

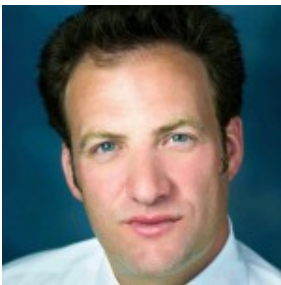
TRPA switches leadership on Regional Plan update – again

By Anne Knowles

STATELINE – The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has someone new shepherding its long overdue Regional Plan update.

Harmon Zuckerman, the former Douglas County principal planner hired by the agency two years ago to oversee the RPU, resigned on Monday, a few days shy of the end of his contract. Arlo Stockham, a planning consultant who previously worked for the city of Reno and the Truckee Meadows Planning Agency, has replaced him as the TRPA's RPU coordinator.

“I was surprised to hear that Harmon is leaving the agency, that's unfortunate,” said Shelly Aldean, Carson City supervisor, TRPA Governing Board member and member of a newly formed TRPA committee to expedite the RPU. “But I am sure his successor will be equally capable.”



Harmon Zuckerman was brought in to the save the Regional Plan, but his contract was not renewed.

“Harmon brought the plan up-to-date and created a set of documents for the next phase,” Jeff Cowen, TRPA spokesman, said. “We’re in a new phase and need new leadership.”

But that is also what the agency said when they brought Zuckerman in.

Stockham was involved in the contentious 2002 Truckee Meadows Regional Plan, which ended up in court, as well as the overhaul of Reno’s zoning codes to promote smart growth.

“Reno and Washoe County had different ideas and in the end it was litigated,” Stockham said of the 2002 regional plan. “But we worked through the issues and were able to reach good consensus. I’ve gained a reputation of being pretty good at consensus building around important and controversial issues. I work hard to minimize points of disagreement.”

Stockham said he previously worked with John Hester, TRPA planning manager, who contacted him about the position.

“I’ve worked with John in the past and this seemed like a good fit,” Stockham said.

Calls for comment to Joanne Marchetta, TRPA executive director, and Hester as well as an email to Zuckerman were not returned.

Stockham said he was getting up to speed on the RPU and wasn’t ready to speak to the details of the plan.

“It’s premature to discuss content,” he told *Lake Tahoe News* this week. “This is all quite new. I had an initial meeting with some of the key planning people (Tuesday).”

Stockman said he also couldn’t comment on exactly how he will coordinate with the new TRPA committee formed last month to ensure adoption of the stalled update.

That six-member committee is chaired by Clem Shute, a

California lawyer and a member of the TRPA Governing Board appointed by the governor of California. The other committee members, all Governing Board members, are Robin Reedy, vice chair of the committee and a governor of Nevada appointee; Aldean; Mara Bresnick, a California Assembly Speaker appointee; Steve Robinson, representing the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; and Larry Sevison, appointed by the Placer County Board of Supervisors.

Reedy thinks the committee will focus more attention on the RPU than the Governing Board has been able to in the past. The RPU was supposed to be done in 2007, with latest release date set for late 2012.

“We’re a smaller group of people with passionate ideas,” Reedy said. “A lot of us are new to the board.”

Aldean agreed. Aldean said she was involved in an earlier committee to redefine tourist accommodation units, the size of a one-bedroom unit for development and redevelopment purposes, which never reached a consensus.

“At the end of the day we agreed to disagree,” Aldean said. “But we have new players. Clem Shute was not on the board. We have new people with new outlooks.”

The TAU definition is one of several issues confronting the committee. Another is the transfer of land coverage between hydrologic basins.

The TRPA would also like to change land coverage policy. Land coverage – the square footage allowed to be built on a parcel determined by environmental impacts – is required to build in the Lake Tahoe Basin and can be banked and sold, but cannot be moved between water sheds. The TRPA would like to allow land coverage available in one watershed to be used in another.

The inability to relocate land coverage, says Cowen, has hampered redevelopment of outdated sites like the recently

approved Boulder Bay project at the Tahoe Biltmore in Crystal Bay.

Many in the conservation community oppose both ideas as allowing excessive and destructive growth in the basin. The League to Save Lake Tahoe, arguably the TRPA's biggest critic, though, is in flux right now after Rochelle Nason, its executive director of nearly 20 years, resigned last week.

"It remains to be seen whether their overall approach will change," Cowen said of the League.

The RPU is at the center of complaints about the TRPA, especially from Nevada, which passed a bill during its recent legislative session to withdraw from the bi-state Compact if certain reforms were not made to the agency. During discussion of the bill, the agency's inability to adopt an RPU, which updates a plan that expired nearly five years ago, was repeatedly cited as an example of the TRPA's failures.

Nevada Secretary of State Ross Miller, a member of the Governing Board, for example, called out the RPU as the prime reason for changing the board's voting structure.

The new RPU committee is scheduled to meet monthly until it is expected to deliver a feasible plan to the entire Governing Board for a vote by the end of 2012.