

S. Tahoe officials looking at ways to stimulate economy

By Kathryn Reed

With a deficit of more than \$1 million that could grow to \$1.5 million depending on how property taxes come in, South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry is looking at ways to bring more money into city coffers.



She presented a plan to the council on Tuesday that calls for an era of cooperation instead of competition. That discussion will be further expanded on Aug. 11 when the City Council has a three-hour workshop starting at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport to discuss its priorities.

Kerry on Aug. 7 spoke of the need to meet with government and regulatory agencies, as well as private businesses in the basin to find the common themes each has in their respective strategic plans in order to find the common denominator.

The council believes recreation is the theme. But that in itself is a broad goal. It could mean having an Olympic training ground, something involving sports medicine, or having a sports complex for various athletic pursuits.

The idea Kerry presented is that the entities will need to give up some of their turf – literally and figuratively – for the greater good. She doesn't want a plan; she wants to define projects and bring them to fruition.

Mayor Claire Fortier asked how this is different than the Prosperity Plan.

"The Prosperity Plan is a planning document. This is an

implementation discussion,” Kerry told the council as to what the gathering of the players would be.

While it was not brought up at the meeting Tuesday, a piece to the puzzle could be the use of the vacant Kingsbury Middle School site in Stateline. While Douglas County School District wants to sell this acreage and the buildings on it, it could possibly be repurposed as the South Shore attempts to find its niche in the world of tourism. The ultimate goal is to find an economic driver.

Entities throughout the basin continue to go into debt (roads for South Lake Tahoe) or borrow from reserves (softball field for Lake Tahoe Unified) to make ends meet and provide what residents would call “the basics”.

Revenues are stagnant everywhere.

Councilman Tom Davis was the biggest naysayer to Kerry’s idea to create a collective vision by getting everyone to agree to focus on one or two projects. He believes it will take too long and not everyone will get on the same page and sounded reluctant to even try.

Councilwoman Angela Swanson was the most supportive of the idea.

“I think the time is now. The agencies are hungry for an action plan,” Swanson said. “This gets us beyond siloing.”

Kerry’s idea to go from recession to recovery to revitalization will be talked about more by the council at Saturday’s workshop.

In other city news:

- A \$150,000 ambulance bought by the city-county joint powers authority is on the streets.
- For the umpteenth time, the council talked about signs. Now

sandwich boards will be allowed Saturdays (8am-5pm), Sundays (8am-5pm), holidays, and Dec. 24-Jan. 11 (8am-5pm each day).