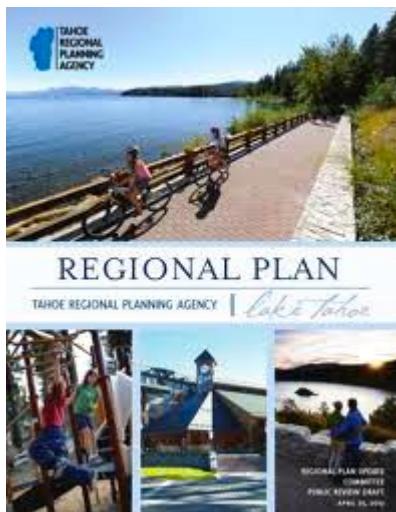


2 TRPA board members refuse to listen to public

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – The two Tahoe Regional Planning Agency board members who have the most issues with the Regional Plan update chose not to listen to the 2½ hours of public testimony on Thursday.

Claire Fortier, who represents South Lake Tahoe on the Governing Board, called out Mara Bresnick and Byron Sher for not taking the time to hear what the locals had to say. It's their job to listen – even if they don't like what is being said. (Bresnick is the California Assembly speaker appointee and Sher is the California Senate Rules Committee appointee.) Bresnick attended the morning session Nov. 15.



“It should speak volumes to the community and the state that the two members who are most vocal are not here to hear the locals,” Fortier said at the end of public comment. “We need to stop catering to those who do not live here. Science has proven we can fix the environment. It is entirely doable. Let us do it.”

She told *Lake Tahoe News* afterward it was not a planned speech – she didn't even have notes to read from. The room was eerily silent as she spoke.

And then Fortier's impassioned tongue lashing of her colleagues was met with applause.

When it comes time to vote on the Regional Plan next month, it

will take a minimum of four yes votes from each state for it to pass.

Before public comment was taken Thursday at Harveys, the Governing Board went over issues the Regional Plan Update Committee discussed the previous day. Bresnick and Sher, who are not on the committee, had seven points to make. They each mentioned how they were bringing forth concerns of the Tahoe Area Sierra Club.

While the League to Save Lake Tahoe has in the past been in lockstep with the Sierra Club, that is not the case with the Regional Plan update. No one from the League spoke either day this week. The League has been at the table as the conservation industry's voice. A TRPA employee said Darcie Goodman-Collins, executive director of the League, has made positive contributions throughout the process.

The board, with Sher and Nancy McDermid not present for the vote, agreed to the committee's recommendation to the Regional Plan update that parcel level best management practices will be required for any redevelopment or new construction until the area-wide BMP project is completed.

The committee was split as to whether a few words should be changed to bring clarity. The board voted to make the changes, with Fortier the lone dissenting vote.

Imperfect. That word was often used by people to describe the Regional Plan update. It's because no one entity or person has gotten everything they want.

What is different from this plan compared to the one approved in 1987 that the basin is still governed by is that the next one will be updated as needed, not overhauled in 20 years.

Those who for the past two days advocated for the Governing Board to approve the document next month said it is time to adopt the plan and move forward – that the status quo would be

worse. Those who have issues with the plan contend it does not protect lake clarity, it would increase development and would create high-rises – that more work is needed before it's adopted.

Jennifer Quashnick with the Tahoe Area Sierra Club on Nov. 14 spoke about how there is no air quality monitoring going on. Regarding this, TRPA Executive Director Joanne Marchetta was visibly perturbed. She said her agency monitors the air at six sites in the basin at an annual cost of \$165,000.

Earlier in the day fire officials spoke about the threat to prescribed fire operations if the Bresnick-Sher proposal were added to the Regional Plan update.

The committee voted not to adopt the Sher-Bresnick proposal.

Twenty-eight people spoke at the Nov. 14 meeting in Incline Village, while 50 people gave input a day later in Stateline.

While all the comments are recorded, no further study of any of them will be done. All the hours of talk were about swaying the Governing Board – at least those who chose to attend. No more meetings of the board or any committee involving the Regional Plan update are scheduled between now and the Dec. 12 vote of the Governing Board. (That meeting will be at Harveys in Stateline, though the time has not been set.)

People, including the economy, vs. the environment are in large part what continue to divide those who have not found consensus. Those for the plan believe the environment, economy and people are tied together. Those who are against or are wary of the plan believe the environment trumps everything else.