

Lukins, STPUD reach deal on TJ Maxx building

By Kathryn Reed

A deal between two South Lake Tahoe water companies has been reached. All that is needed is approval by the state Public Utilities Commission. And that could come this week.

The CPUC must approve the expense of the connections that will provide fire suppression, if needed, to the building that houses TJ Maxx at the Y.

Lukins Brothers Water Company has agreed to buy a fire-only connection from South Tahoe Public Utility District for \$147,566.52.

When TJ Maxx moved in last fall a temporary agreement was worked out between the water companies. The new agreement is the permanent solution.

The Garfinkles own the TJ Maxx building, which also includes an adjacent empty retail spot. They will be footing the bill.

“I don’t want to charge my customers something they are not benefiting from and the PUC won’t allow it,” Jennifer Lukins, operations manager for Lukins Brothers, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The PUC looks at who is requesting service and who is it going to benefit. The Garfinkles are requesting service and the Garfinkles are getting the benefit.”

After the new 8-inch main is in place, the existing intertie between the two water systems at Eloise Avenue and Dunlap Street will be closed.

South Lake Tahoe Fire Department is also requiring a private fire hydrant be installed on site.

When TJ Maxx moved in they required that all utilities be separated from the adjoining building. However, the changes will benefit that side of the building as well. The Garfinkles are in negotiations with a potential tenant for that section, but nothing could move forward without the water situation being resolved.

Another factor in all of this is that the building next to the Garfinkles', which is owned by someone else, could tap into the 8-inch line. If that were to occur, the two property owners would split the cost.

"Any sprinkler system required for a new building being discussed at the location of the old AAA building could also be connected to a short extension of the 8-inch main as well," explained South Tahoe PUD General Manager Richard Solbrig.

There have been preliminary discussions of tearing down the existing building and replacing it with something else.