

Meyers plan making incremental progress

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Passion for their community is one thing Meyers residents have in common. Oh, and most also think any future buildings should not be more than 35-feet tall.

What started Wednesday night as a meeting to address six issues turned into a 2½-hour opportunity for about a dozen of the more than 100 attendees to give their two cents about what they want this small enclave at the base of Echo Summit to be.

It all has to do with Meyers trying to create an area plan that will be the planning tool for the next 20 years. It will also be incorporated into the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan. That bi-state regulatory agency and the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors must each approve the plan.



Dave Reichel of the Meyers Community Advisory Council talks March 19 as fellow members John Garofalos, Rebecca Schwartz and Rene Brejc listen. Photo/LTN

The issues on the March 19 agenda included:

- Should there be an incentive program for developers
- Maximum height
- The number of hotels per acre and where those tourist accommodation units should be located
- The composition of the Meyers Community Advisory Council and how it is selected
- What to do with the Tveten property
- Promoting local businesses.

These subjects came about as the most pressing issues from the more than 100 comments submitted to the county since the Feb. 26 meeting.

By a show of hands people were overwhelmingly in favor of 35 feet being the basic height limit in the commercial and industrial areas.

But when it came to incentives for developers the audience was not as cohesive in its beliefs. However, most came around to believing there could be a time when fewer restrictions on height and density may be needed to attract the ideal business to Meyers. A recreation oriented business or broader tourist entity like a discovery museum had people getting on board with realizing that type of facility would need to be larger in size.

While “variances” was used, that word will have to change. This is because in TRPA’s world variances are not allowed.

And another reason to have “variances-incentives-exemptions” (call it what you will) in the area plan is because if they weren’t, the proposed project seeking the exemptions would have to do an environmental analysis. This is because it would in essence be changing the Regional Plan because the area plan becomes part of the Regional Plan.

County and TRPA reps will devise, again, verbiage for a potential incentive program and the potential types of development that could be allowed outside the 35-foot limit.

Who exactly would determine if the project were "right" for Meyers remains an unknown. But the masses leaned toward a more substantive Meyers Community Advisory Council (MCAC) that would be appointed by Meyers residents. But whether that is legally possible remains to be seen. It is not the common protocol. Nor would it be realistic for MCAC members to be elected because of the cost and time involved.

Normal procedure is for the Board of Supervisors to appoint people to advisory panels.

The goal, though, is this advisory body will be more formal. This includes being subject to state open meeting laws. It's possible it could have a significant say in design review.

Ultimately, though, projects are the decision of the county and TRPA, depending on the size.

People seemed more amenable to hotels having fewer units per acre – more like 15 units per acre instead of 40.

What were lacking from the presentation were visual examples of buildings of certain heights as well as designs. At the Tahoe Valley Area Plan meeting for South Lake Tahoe last month photographs were shown depicting various types of alpine architecture at various heights, as well as density.

A comment form was passed out Wednesday night asking people their preference on the incentive program, height regulations, and hotel locations and density.

The verbal and written comments will be taken for a limited time that has yet to be determined. After that the county will come up with a final draft document that will be circulated. Then environmental paperwork will be created. Eventually this

all goes for a vote before the governing bodies, with public comment taken at those meetings.

Meyers Area Plan documents and other information are on the county's website. Comments may be emailed to MeyersAreaPlan@edcgov.us.