

Future governance of Meyers up in the air

By Kathryn Reed

Who will be the voice for Meyers once the area plan process is through?

That answer remains to be seen.

At recent meetings regarding the Meyers Area Plan residents have said they want more say in what happens to their enclave that sits at the base of Echo Summit to the west of the city limits of South Lake Tahoe. Being in the unincorporated area of El Dorado County residents are governed by the Board of Supervisors who are based in Placerville, as well as the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.



The Meyers Area Plan mostly deals with the highlighted area. Photo/LTN

Forming a community services district has been talked about as a way to take what is the current Meyers Advisory Council and formalize it more. (The MAC evolved out of the Meyers Roundtable.)

Brendan Ferry, chief planner for El Dorado County, told *Lake Tahoe News*, “(The Meyers Area Plan) still formalizes the MAC

as an official body of the county. It is just expanded to include the possibility of forming a CSD in the future. In that case the CSD board would essentially be the MAC.”

Here is the exact language in what is now the third draft of the Meyers Area Plan:

“Policy 1.2: El Dorado County shall establish and maintain a Meyers Advisory Council (MAC), with regularly scheduled and publically noticed meetings, to provide recommendations to the Planning Commission, County Board of Supervisors, and/or TRPA on the implementation of this Plan. The MAC shall include seven residents or property owners in the Lake Tahoe Region of unincorporated El Dorado County. The MAC shall include community members representing business, environmental, recreation, and other appropriate interests necessary to carry out the vision of the Meyers Area Plan. The MAC shall be comprised of elected board members of a Community Services District or other appropriate special district, or if no appropriate entity exists, the MAC members may be appointed by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.”

There is another meeting about the plan on June 26; at which time it’s possible the CSD will be discussed.

David Reichel, who is on the MAC, said at no time did that body make a formal recommendation to the community as a whole or to county staff about what it would like the MAC to be in the future.

“I’m aware people are looking at other options to make the body more formal,” Reichel told *Lake Tahoe News*.

A CSD is also a taxing entity and has elected board members. CSDs usually get a portion of property taxes or assess the area an additional tax that would be used just for that particular CSD’s business. But it can be an uphill battle to tap into the existing property tax allotment because it would

mean some other entity would then be given less money.

LAFCo (Local Area Formation Commission) is the only governing body authorized to form districts. The three ways to get LAFCo's attention is through voter petition, the landowner and petition by another agency.

The Legislature treats a CSD like it's a junior city. But land use is not something a CSD has jurisdiction over. And land use is the overriding issue Meyers area residents want to control based on comments at public meetings for the past two years.

"If you want to have some kind of role in development issues, it would best to petition the Board of Supervisors to create some kind of advisory board that will give them input on what kind of development is going through," Jose Enriquez, El Dorado County LAFCo executive director, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He said Pollock Pines and other West Slope communities have these types of advisory boards. The Board of Supervisors appoints those members.

Enriquez said CSDs are usually formed for municipal services like fire, parks, and lighting-landscaping.

"If you want to be a land use regulating agency and not deal with the Board of Supervisors, then you form your own city," Enriquez said. "That is a much larger discussion."

Even though LAFCo doesn't see a CSD being the correct route for Meyers, in the cover letter released earlier this month about the current draft Meyers Area Plan, it says, "Many community members have expressed a desire for a locally elected body to review project proposals in Meyers and to maintain and update the plan in the future. In response, the county is evaluating the establishment of a Community Services District, which would review proposed projects in Meyers, initiate future revisions to the plan, and direct some funding for local improvement projects. If established, this Community

Services District would be comprised of a board directly elected by Meyers residents, and it would fulfill the role of the Meyers Advisory Council described in the plan.”

Neither El Doardo County Chief Administrator Terri Daly nor Supervisor Norma Santiago is responding to inquiries from *Lake Tahoe News*. The outside flack hired by Daly to deal with the media told *LTN* to attend this week’s meeting to have questions answered.

If Meyers went through with a CSD, it would also have to define what Meyers is in terms of geographic boundaries. Only property owners in that CSD would be taxed and have a say in who is on the CSD board.

Meyers could also form a business improvement district like the property owners along Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe did. Or they could do like the South Lake Tahoe lodging establishments and form a tourism improvement district. These, though, are both taxing entities that would require those affected to vote on creating the districts and vote to tax themselves.

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Notes:

- The next meeting is June 26, 6pm at the CCC building in Meyers.
- The draft plan is available online.
- Here are the proposed Meyers Area Plan revisions.
- Comments may be submitted to MeyersAreaPlan@edcgov.us.
- Future meetings: El Dorado County Planning Commission – Aug. 28, Placerville; El Dorado County Board of Supervisors – Sept. 9, Placerville; Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Advisory Planning Commission – Sept. 10, Stateline; Tahoe Regional

Planning Agency Governing Board – Oct. 22, Stateline.