

# Letter: Meyers plan transparency questioned

**Publisher's note:** *This letter was sent to El Dorado County CAO Terri Daly on June 15. It is reprinted with permission.*

**Dear Ms. Daly:**

I am writing to you on behalf of California's South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce President George Alm and the board of directors and residents and business owners in Meyers.

I learned within the last day that the county is scheduling a "public" meeting on June 26, 2014, to discuss the draft Meyers Area Plan. The party in question who informed me received the card from the business owner of her property. It began, "Dear Meyers Area Resident." The card came from county offices at 924 B Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150. The party in question did not receive a card at her residence and other Meyers residents, I am told, have not received a similar notification. The card asks those receiving it to return comments on their online Plan to the "address above" or to [MeyersAreaPlan@edcgov.us](mailto:MeyersAreaPlan@edcgov.us). I can send you a copy of the card notice received if you wish? I was told that the *Lake Tahoe News* online media outlet received the same advertisement, and Ms. [Kathryn] Reed was good enough to place a notice in her fine publication. However, this notice is not "legal" notification.



Dave Jinkens

In regard to this scheduled meeting, please let me bring up a few comments and concerns. As the chief administrative officer of our county, I know you will be interested in them, and I hope you know that our chamber and Meyers residents only what is best for the entire community. We know that you have many matters of county business to address, and the details of our concerns on this particular matter may not be ones with which you are familiar.

1. Public Notification Process – It is my understanding that the county did not publish a “legal notice” of the meeting: The notice given was not sent to all residents some of whom have been involved in Meyers planning issues for many years: The notice thus appears to be sent to select groups; and the notice and date of the meeting does not give enough time to review the draft plan and come prepared with informed comments and questions. In addition, members of the public who signed up for the email list to be notified about the plan have not received any email notifications.

The draft plan is apparently available online, but for some people they may not use computers and thus the draft is inaccessible. I know of no hard-copy available to the public at any public location which over the years is a customary practice of local government. In addition, for persons with certain types of disabilities and sight impairments who have access and use computers, reading large documents online are difficult and hurt their eyes. I am one of the latter people. I have requested a hard copy, and I will pay for it.

A major issue in this particular planning process has been and remains the perception of a lack of transparency, meetings on plan components with less than inclusive notice, a limited number of special interest parties invited to meetings with County officials, reported consensus on plan components where no vote was taken or manually recorded and meetings of the MAC held on the topic where no Brown Act advertisements were made. In my long experience in local government, I must admit being

perplexed by the process used and the lack of broad-based community involvement for a Plan that will lay out the future of the historic Meyers community for many years in the future.

Because of the lack of community notice and verified community involvement, the current process and projected outcomes have generated suspicion, mistrust, and alarm by members of the Meyers community. As requested by the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce in previous correspondence, approval of any plan should only come after commonly accepted public notice for land use matters are made, a "validated" survey of the entire Meyers community on major plan components taken, serious public engagement with the entire community, and time is taken to allow the district's new supervisor to be part of the final approval process.

The absence of a legal notice for a major community planning meeting as the one to take place on June 26 is of grave concern a customary local government practice.

2. California's South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce Letters – On May 2, 2014, and May 21, 2014, letters were sent to the Board of Supervisors discussing the concerns with the timing and process for adoption of the Meyers plan. The letters were sent in support of Meyers residents and Meyers business owners and operators. To date, the follow-up letter of May 21, 2014, to the Board of Supervisors did not receive a reply of any kind from either the Board or staff. In addition, since the South Tahoe Chamber has also communicated directly with county staff on behalf of Meyers residents and business owners, yet we too did not receive a notice of this meeting as well as no reply to our May 21, 2014, letter

## Conclusion

I am respectfully requesting your help, assistance and involvement in this matter to ensure transparency in decision-making for Meyers residents and a process that ensures true

public engagement and participation in the planning for Meyers future as proposed in this email and the South Tahoe Chamber's previous letters. Our Chamber does not question the motives of anyone in this process. We simply believe that the suggestions we are making on behalf of Meyers residents and business owners will improve the process and the outcome.

I am copying the members of the Board of Supervisors as a courtesy on this important land use matter since previous correspondence has been directed to the board. Copies are being sent to TRPA officials as well. We all would appreciate your help and assistance with this matter. We want the process and outcomes to be a success for all parties.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

**Dave Jinkens, South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce volunteer board member**