

# South Tahoe looking to renovate rec center



The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center's men's bathroom lacks privacy. Photos/Kathryn Reed

**By Kathryn Reed**

Tape on many weight room apparatuses, blocks at the swimming pool the public aren't allowed to use, no private showers in the men's room, two out of three showers off-limits in the women's locker room.

This is the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center.

It was built in 1975. Nearly 40 years later it is sorely in need of being overhauled, if not gutted and rebuilt from the ground up.

"It's rundown and needs serious renovation," Pete Fink, chairman of the city's recreation commission, told the more

than two dozen people at a Nov. 18 workshop.

Turning this into a green building is a goal so it is extremely energy efficient. Today the annual electric bill is about \$170,000 for the building, including the pool.

Last year \$37,000 had to be spent on fixing the roof.

“It seemed like it was raining more inside than out,” Fink said.



Many would like the pool to be upgraded.

An aspect of the recreation master plan being developed by the city and El Dorado County calls for renovating the center. Last week was the first opportunity for the public to tour the facility and offer input as to what they would like to see changed.

Faye-Marie Pekar, Grace Usui Meyer and Jenn Boyd finished their evening lap swimming before joining the group to offer their opinions.

They told *Lake Tahoe News* the locker rooms should to be upgraded, the starting blocks need to be accessible to anyone, there should be a professional timing system and the number of lanes expanded beyond six.

They and others voiced the need for a swim center like Carson Valley has where there are multiple pools that would accommodate divers, swimmers and those looking for therapy sessions.

Some would like a permanent roof to replace the bubble over the pool. Bleachers would be beneficial for spectators during competitions.

Both locker rooms are a bit repulsive. Even though a major overhaul of the rec center is likely, the city is going forward with fixing the rusting, corroding women's showers.

In the men's locker room the urinals go to the ground in an old-school fashion. A short wall separates the two toilets, but privacy is completely lacking.

The rec center has various rooms that are used for meetings and classes. One has mirrors for dance class, but the floor in it is not conducive to dancing. And the mirrors don't make for a professional meeting center for the entities that rent it for that purpose.

An industrial kitchen is adjacent to the gym.

Lauren Thomaselli, parks manager, suggested putting in a concession window between the kitchen and gym so food could easily be sold. She would also like to see cooking classes.

Caterers in town who need a facility that meets the health department's requirements often rent the kitchen.



Duct tape is common on weight room equipment.

The weight room equipment looks like something found in a bygone era.

“A lot of the equipment here I’ve been told was donated by clubs that went under and it looks like it,” Peter Evenhuis, who was touring the site, told *Lake Tahoe News*. His suggestion is to lease equipment in the future.

The city is looking for more input on the rec center via this online survey.