

Letter: Time for Meyers to unite

To the community,

We do not have our elected leaders' voice at the Board of Supervisors:

As you may have heard by now, our new (El Dorado County) supervisor, Sue Novasel, cannot vote on, nor participate in planning for the new Meyers Area Plan. First, we respect Sue. She's a hard-working woman who clearly cares for her community. However, with the county's legal opinion that she cannot participate due to a conflict of interest, our community has been left without an elected vote on the plan. Yes, a second opinion is being requested from the state, but this takes time.

This is unsettling to say the least. Worse yet, this comes after many community volunteers have spent over a year trying to slow the fast-moving TRPA and El Dorado County train down so that the Meyers community has the chance – through a transparent, inclusive, and clear process – to develop the plan for our own future that is based on the desires of area residents, not TRPA nor special land speculator's interests. We had high hopes that our new supervisor could help ensure the kind of process our community deserves. Now, we have an appointed supervisor from another district who comes from downtown Placerville, not Meyers.

The planning process is flawed, undemocratic, and not inclusive. So what do we do now?

That's the big question. The last thing anyone wants is a repeat of the county's 2014 process, whereby TRPA and the county present a spruced-up "dog and pony" show at yet another community workshop intended to impress but lacking clear and

transparent information regarding the changes TRPA wants to impose on Meyers. Nor does anyone want to see the community's input tossed out the window (again) by a Planning Commission unfamiliar with Meyers and the poor planning process we've dealt with to date.

There is a better way to plan for Meyers' future.

We believe we can still turn this around. We have an opportunity to decide our own future. In fact, our neighbors at the Y in the city of South Lake Tahoe have recently given us a reason to be optimistic – the South Lake Tahoe community stood up to TRPA, and through a well-informed process led by city staff, citizens were able to define the future they want – not what TRPA imposed on them. As a result, the draft Tahoe Valley Area Plan (the “Y” Area Plan) has been modified and scaled down from the increases imposed by TRPA's 2012 Regional Plan update. For example, the 56-foot height (four stories) prescribed by TRPA for the entire “town center” (most of the Y area) was reduced. In another example, TRPA's “one-size-fits-all” town center approach was divided into five districts to recognize the unique qualities throughout the area. Notably the 1993 Meyers Plan included four districts in “downtown Meyers” before TRPA's Plan lumped them all into one “town center.” We have wondered if the SLT community can choose unique districts and height, why has there been so much resistance to the Meyers community doing the same?

We have also heard positive comments from numerous members of the public regarding the city's public outreach; rather than spouting off numbers and presenting charts, staff brought pictures to workshops and asked the public to voice opinions; thus giving people the chance to express what they wanted without having to first take an LTCC class in land use planning.

The entire Meyers Community, not outside special interests, must decide what is contained in any new Meyers Plan.

Meyers can still take charge of planning for our own future. But, the community volunteers need your help. The County has scheduled another public workshop for the Meyers Area Plan update for May 6 from 5:30-7:30pm at the magnet school in Meyers, 1095 East San Bernardino Ave.

We need you to attend and speak up. Demand a clear and transparent process and one that includes the entire Meyers community. Tell the agencies what you want to see for Meyer's future. Make a fuss and don't put up with another "dog and pony show." If our community does not rally to this effort, we will be pushed aside by TRPA, county representatives from outside the basin, and NV-side development interests (e.g. Stateline's Tahoe Chamber) and left with TRPA's plan for the future of Meyers. From what we've heard from the community so far, their vision for the future of Meyers is a far cry from the interests of those of us who have made the Meyers area our home. TRPA does not represent Meyers, and the only board member that has lived and worked in Meyers had to recuse herself from the Meyers Plan update.

Meyers community members can make a difference if you get involved.

Some food for thought: Lack of involvement and complacency allowed TRPA to push their plans on us over two years ago without most of us knowing it. If we don't get involved now, we will remain vulnerable to TRPA's plan for Meyers. So, we can sit back and be upset about the inability of our elected representative to participate in our plan update, or we can take action and demand that the new plan represents what we want to see for Meyers. Let the other El Dorado County Board members know that we don't want TRPA's plan for Meyers – we want our own. Please join us on May 6 and be ready to be heard.

Sincerely,

Joe Cardinale, Angie Olson, Jennifer Quashnick, Moya Sanders, Rebecca Schwartz and Diane Verwoest