

TRPA grants Barton Ranch demolition permit

By Kathryn Reed

A segment of South Lake Tahoe's past is about to visually disappear from the landscape.

A hearings officer with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency today approved the demolition of all of the buildings at the old Barton Ranch at the Y. Slated for the wrecking ball are the barn, ranch house, guesthouses, cabin, cottage and shed.

Gary Midkiff, a land use and permitting consultant representing the Ledbetter and Mosher families who own the property and are descendants of the Bartons, spoke at Monday's meeting. Despite a full room, Kirk Ledbetter was the only other person to talk June 29. He could not be reached after the meeting.

The family takes issue with people putting up signs that say "History vs. Greed". The family's contention is the usefulness of these buildings is long gone. Now vagrants are using them. Vandals are ruining what is still standing. Squatters are living there.

The family has been going through this process for more than four years.



The boarded up Barton Ranch buildings in South Lake Tahoe are likely to be demolished this summer. Photo/Bill Kingman

The landowners are open to people repurposing the buildings – whether turning them into historical museum-like structures or something else. No one has come forward with the money to make that a reality.

Part of the problem is these once iconic white and green buildings are full of graffiti, mold, mildew and lead-based paint.

TRPA is involved in the process and not just South Lake Tahoe officials because it is identified as a historical resource by the bi-state regulatory agency. This triggered a more involved process than a routine demolition permit.

The Bartons were pioneers in this area. In 1915, they moved to the South Shore, establishing a dairy ranch at what is now the Lake Tahoe Airport. Across the Upper Truckee River it is still known as the Barton Meadow.

They ran a milk route to Echo Lakes, Camp Sacramento, Twin Bridges, Tahoe Meadow and Beecher's Country Club, where

Harrah's is now located.

Then they developed the acreage near the Y. At that time it was wide open – not full of commercial enterprises like today.

What becomes of this 4-acre site next to Raley's remains to be seen. The demolition permit is good for three years. If the structures don't come down in that time the property owners lose their rights to the commodities associated with the parcel. This includes 39,007-square-feet of coverage, two residential units and 5,631-square-feet of residential floor area. Those items will be banked and the owners able to use them on another site.

Conditions of the permit include revegetating the site and trying to obtain a recorded history of the one family member still alive who lived at the property.

If anyone appeals the demolition permit before the July 20 deadline, the Governing Board would then have the final say.