

Meyers plan to move onto environmental review

By Kathryn Reed

The vote by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on Monday regarding the Meyers Area Plan reflected that of the community – it wasn't unanimous – just like there isn't consensus among residents as to what should be done.

Many of the 17 people who spoke Aug. 31 believed it was necessary to talk more before moving on to the environmental phase. Just as many said it was time to take the next step.

Ultimately, the board voted 3-1 to start the environmental review. Supervisor Shiva Frentzen was the dissenting voice. Supervisor Sue Novasel was not part of the discussion or vote, having recused herself because she owns property in the area.

In the 3½ years that the Meyers Area Plan has been discussed three area plans on the South Shore have been completed. The Meyers plan is at least two years from being complete because it could take that long for the environmental documents to be finalized. The time frame will in part be determined by the level of review that is conducted. Then there will be five opportunities for the public to comment. Ultimately the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board will have the final say.

One of Frentzen's hang-ups was not knowing how much the process would cost the county going forward. An environmental impact report could cost more than \$100,000. She wanted a guarantee there would be a return on investment for that outlay of cash. It's not something anyone can guarantee.



El Dorado County planner Brendan Ferry on Aug. 31 advises supervisors about the Meyers plan as about 30 people listen. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Brendan Ferry, county planner, pointed out that the county is not in the development business. While he said a goal of the plan is to attract economic development, there is no guarantee this will occur.

Fear of a large-scale development has gripped this small South Shore enclave ever since Norma Santiago when she was supervisor spearheaded the **Catalyst project**. That project was dead in the water almost as soon as it came to life. But just the thought of something of that magnitude still strikes fear with many.

However, many who spoke on Monday said it was apt to be locals who initiate any new development in Meyers.

Still, one thing that divides those who live there is whether a motel or bed and breakfast ought to be built. Currently, other than camping, there is no place for tourists to sleep in Meyers. The criteria in the proposed plan would allow for some sort of lodging – something the existing 1993 plan can no longer accommodate based on zoning regulations and commodities distributions.

The current plan, which is the fourth draft, contains:

- 42-foot height limit; this is the same as what's in the

1993 plan.

- 34,150-square-feet of commercial floor area, with 17,500 dedicated to small businesses. The 1993 plan had 25,400 square feet. The difference is that Bob Dog Pizza did not use as much CFA as anticipated.
- 30 units per acre for a lodging property, 20 units per acre for multi-family residential; 1993 plan had 40 and 15 units per acre, respectively.
- One level of incentives for potential developers; 1993 plan had no incentives.
- Meyers Advisory Council will either be elected or appointed, be a formal body and must adhere to open meeting laws; 1993 had a loose knit group with zero power.
- 4 California Tahoe Conservancy lots will be classified recreation, while 5 will retain current zoning to allow for potential development.

The next step is for county officials – with the help of their legal staff and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency – to determine the level of environmental review.

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In other action:

- The board heard a presentation about the **Community Wildfire Protection Plan**, a basinwide effort to make the area less prone to catastrophic wildfire. When Supervisor Frentzen asked why the basin doesn't have small fire safe councils, Lake Valley Fire Chief Gareth Harris chose not to tell her about the **misappropriation of funds** and how many contractors still have not been paid.
- South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry and marketing guru Carl Ribaldo talked about the legacy principles, which

are designed to get all parties – public and private – on board with a shared vision for the area even if the means to get to the end is different. The overriding desire is to leave a legacy of sorts.