

Proposed campground unpopular with residents

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – Is it a campground or is it a resort? Is it enhancing or hurting existing recreation? Is it a precursor for future development on the ridge? Is it precedent setting? Will it add to already heavy traffic on the North Shore?

These are just a few of the many questions the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board will have to answer as the proposed **Brockway Campground** makes its way through the planning, permitting and approval process.

On Wednesday the proponents, Mountainside Partners (formerly East West Partners), spelled out plans to turn an undeveloped parcel off Fibreboard Freeway into a 550-site campground that would include tent camping, RVs and ecoshelters.

More than 200 people turned out for the nearly 2½-hour presentation. All of the 27 individuals who spoke were against the project.

The Sept. 23 unveiling gave the Governing Board an opportunity to learn about the controversial project without an action required. The application was submitted in July. An environmental impact report and environmental impact statement will be required.

Proponents were a bit contradictory in describing the terrain – at first saying how it is a disturbed site because of all the logging that has gone on there in the past (the land is owned by Sierra Pacific Industries), but then invoking how going forward it will be treated like a national park, with a bit of reverence.

Angela Lin with Square One said light from the campground would not be visible from North Shore towns. Many in attendance did not agree with that conclusion.

Attorney Lew Feldman touted the recreation benefits. The audience said a massive campground would negatively impact the current hiking and mountain biking by putting development in the middle of the forest.

In addition to the camping, there will be a swimming pool, lodge for dining and other structures.

Traffic concerns were repeated by many. Fibreboard Freeway, which is a misnomer because it is really a pothole filled U.S. Forest Service road, is off Highway 267 near Northstar. People wonder what the campground would do to already congested roads, as well as what the air quality impacts would be.

When TRPA votes on the project five of the California representatives will have to say yes for it to pass.

Detractors are already lining up.

"This is really blurring the definition between a campground and a resort," Hal Cole, who represents South Lake Tahoe on the TRPA board, said. "This is not where I want a campground. This is hard to swallow on a lot of levels." (He is a contractor by trade.)

Clem Shute, California governor appointee to the board, is weary of the former proposal of 112 residences for this site being "suspended" instead of "abandoned." He called it suspicious and that it was like a threat to have it still lurking out there.

Shute and others pointed out how the Regional Plan says development should occur near urban areas or town centers, and that campgrounds per plan area statements should be near infrastructure. This proposal does not conform to those

existing criteria.