

Letter: Meyers resident wants TRPA to respond

Publisher's note: *This letter was sent to the executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and reprinted with permission.*

Dear Ms. [Joanne] Marchetta

This is with regard to the Tahoe Hockey Academy (THA) proposal, up for a public hearing on the TRPA Governing Board June 22 general agenda.

About a month ago our Christmas Valley neighbors learned of the proposed hockey-rink-cum-high school intended for the bottom of Old Meyers Grade, and that it had already been at least partially approved through the county's permitting process. This came as a shock to all of us, as we are located right in this area, but had no idea. We learned only by happenstance from an **online news source** that this project was in the works, permits issued, and was evidently on its way to the TRPA for a "final review."

Local residents like myself are anxious for some clarity, re just what is being authorized with this proposal, and via what process, exactly. To say the least, its progress through El Dorado County's permitting channels has been covert and swift. It took some research to uncover any info at all about this "academy," as even residents closest to the site had not been noticed. Below is what we've learned:

- The proposal is to establish a boarding school for up to 100 high school students.
- This is to be a 24/7 business complex with additional structures that so far include housing for 100 students plus staff, an ice rink for hockey competitions,

basketball and tennis courts, and stadium lighting. Other development is yet to be determined.

· A large parking lot is planned, to accommodate the many vehicles that presumably won't interfere at all with local traffic, pedestrians or animals. (This would be the supposition, if an impact study could be located, but so far that particular search has yielded nothing).

Despite the significance of this "proposal," information has been challenging to uncover, and muddled when we do. The above facts came from the THA website, which has now been sealed. A still further example of misdirection, the actual identity of the THA is a moving target. The THA is also known as the Lake Tahoe Hockey Academy, LTHA, and the California Hockey Academy, or CHA. The obfuscation alone raises some obvious questions. Given the tax and fee benefits for the county and TRPA, the answers may be equally obvious, but I think our community would appreciate your response.

Specifically, how is it that a grades 9-12 boarding school with a hockey rink was allowed to process through the county's permitting system as a "recreational (that is, day-use) facility?" As if a picnic area with a few tables was up for approval? And why is this proposal, now that some pertinent facts have been dragged to light, still being treated by TRPA as legitimate business? Has there been an environmental impact study? It's clear that this proposal should either be resubmitted with valid information and the appropriate impact research, or better yet, permanently tabled.

On its website the TRPA promotes itself as "A Voice for Lake Tahoe." Good, because Meyers is part of Lake Tahoe, and our community is hoping that you and TRPA will use that voice to protect our idyllic neighborhood from the threat of a school/competitive sport facility materializing on top of us. TRPA's stated purpose to "Insure an equilibrium between the Region's natural endowment and its manmade environment" seems

formulated to mandate intervention in exactly this kind of struggle. We are hopeful that our rural quality of life here will be spared a ribbon-cutting festival at the bottom of Old Meyers Grade.

I speak for many when I say that we are in hopes that you will help us.

Audrey Morrow, Christmas Valley