

SLT on quest to redefine itself via recreation



This is a rendering of the preferred alternative for Regan Beach. Drawing/Design Workshop

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – People need to decide if they want the status quo or to make the investment.

That was the overriding message South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry delivered July 6 to Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe.

Pictures told the story as much as her words. A collage of where the city has been, where it is and where it could go filled the screen.

She is a proponent of doing things and not just developing a plan that sits on a shelf. Kerry also credited leaders in the city and community, as well as partner agencies for helping create a vision for what the South Shore as a whole can become.

The city is on the cusp of truly embracing recreation as its economic engine. To do so will require more investment in infrastructure. It has started to do so by adding playfields near Lake Tahoe Community College that will be ready for action in a year.

Two major improvements would be replacing the more than 30-year-old recreation center and overhauling Regan Beach. The community has weighed-in at multiple meetings about each site to the point conceptual drawings have been developed and preliminary budgets sketched. It could take \$30 million to build the rec center people envision.

It would be twice the size of what is there now. This would include four basketball courts that could be transformed into meeting space, a new swim center that offers activities for all ages – and not just serious swimmers, exercise equipment not held together by duct tape, a bay door that would open to outdoor recreation, and more.

There is also talk of having the local Boys & Girls Club be partners so those youth would have a place to play.

The renderings Kerry provided are like nothing that is currently available in the basin. It would be state-of-the-art, with modern technology, aesthetics that are modern and mountain, and functionality for a variety of sports.

To pay for it the city is putting a tax proposal on the Nov. 8 ballot to raise the hotel tax by 2 percentage points. The local lodging association group already backs this idea.

The caveat is that the additional money raised will go toward recreation – and only recreation. It will take 66 percent of the voters to make this happen.

The city would then seek bonds to actually pay for the rec center, with the transient occupancy tax paying that debt.

If voters say yes, construction could begin in 2018. It would likely be a two-year build-out.

Also to be funded from the TOT hike would be Regan Beach.