

Letter: North Tahoe Event Center belongs to public

To the community,

The face of Kings Beach is about to be changed ... again. Laulima Partners has purchased the Ferrari Crown Motel property and has big plans for it. One of those plans involves one of our most valuable community assets, the North Tahoe Event Center. Located right in the center of town, it is home to myriad community events including weddings, funerals, public meetings, yoga, and Jazzercise. It is a benefit to the entire North Shore.

It's also free of debt, and its fantastic location right on the beach puts it in the range of a \$4 million valuation. But now the North Tahoe Public Utility District (NTPUD) wants to grant Laulima a long term lease (30 to 99 years has been thrown around) because the center has been running at a deficit.

North Shore taxpayers currently pay about \$100 a year for the recreational amenities associated with the NTPUD: the regional park, the event center, and the boat ramp and parking in Tahoe Vista. Shouldn't these taxpayers be given the option to cover the current shortfall rather than handing such a valuable asset over lock, stock, and barrel to a developer whose bottom line is ...well, the bottom line?

NTPUD would in effect be allowing a community asset to become private property. Laulima intends to build condos on the lake side of Highway 28 and a hotel on the other side (56-feet high...yikes!) And you can't blame them for wanting another lakefront venue for their project – talk about value-added.

Laulima claims locals will receive a discount on the new estimated rate of between \$800 and \$8,000 per wedding event

(since we're all using the event center at nominal rates –starting at \$29/hour right now, how much of a discount would make it worth it?); Laulima also claims there will be an area dedicated to the community (we're hopeful it won't be the janitor's closet).

Whatever the NTPUD ends up negotiating with Laulima, common sense tell us there is clearly more benefit to Laulima than North Tahoe.

Ann Nichols, North Tahoe Preservation Alliance