

Opinion: Time to deny Martis Valley West

By Ellie Waller

The Martis Valley West Parcel Operating Agreement (MVOA) has become a pawn, not the final puzzle piece to protect and connect 6,000-plus acres of conservation land to the Mount Rose Wilderness. Below is a quick chronology:

2013: CREW LLC (East West Partners), Sierra Pacific Industries, Sierra Watch and Mountain Area Preservation enter an agreement (MVOA) to protect 6,000-plus acres. The MVOA did not contemplate a TRPA area plan; it was only supposed to be within the Martis Valley Community Plan boundary.

2014: A 112-unit gated luxury development is proposed as part of the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan (MVWPSP). Placer County prepared this area plan for the 112.8-acre portion of the Martis Valley West Parcel (MVWP) Specific Plan located entirely within the Tahoe basin and subject to the jurisdiction of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. As mentioned, this was not envisioned as part of the MVOA. There was so much public outcry, the proposed area plan was suspended by the applicants and removed from the MVWPSP.

2015: A replacement proposal for the 112-unit gated luxury development is proposed by Mountainside Partners (formerly East West Partners: same development team of MVWPSP) – the Brockway Campground, a 550-unit glamping experience with just as much public outcry.

This proposal is reckless piece-meal planning disguised as a separate project. The egregious campground proposal illustrates these guys are not concerned with conservation; they just want to be paid for the east side incentives, swap designations and make money on the west side through lot sales

for luxury home development, so how is this a public benefit?

“Placer County Board of Supervisors ... you must vote to deny the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan as proposed.”

2016: Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan final environmental documentation is released in May. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Tahoe Area Sierra Club, League to Save Lake Tahoe, Mountain Area Preservation, Sierra Watch, hundreds of members of the public, Caltrans, CalFire, Northstar Community Service District/Fire District, North Tahoe Fire District, North Tahoe PUD, Placer County Air Pollution District, town of Truckee, and Tahoe-Truckee Airport among many others comment on final environmental impact report.

Decision makers: We have no confidence in Mountainside Partners. They have unfinished projects at Old Greenwood, Grays Crossing, Northstar and Highlands. These projects are not just planned to be phased; they are incomplete, so why do we need another development by these applicants when they cannot finish their existing projects or file bankruptcy?

June 9, 2016: Placer Planning Commission hearing. The public comes out in force, with over 200 people in attendance, with only two people in support of the project. The hearing is continued to July 7, 2016, and again over 200 community members express their disdain for an ill-conceived project with little to no support. The Planning Commission decision is 5-2 with a recommendation to deny the project.

The conservation easement is being held hostage: From the MVOA: East Parcel Purchase, Sale and Option Agreement Term Sheet page 2: “Exhibit C 3. East Parcel Scenarios: If the West Parcel does not receive initial approval. No deal on East Parcel acquisition and/or conservation easement.”

Remedies, Page 4 of MVOA: “5d. If the Conservation Group or Land Trust Partners litigate the Initial Approval at any point

in the process of approval or within 120 days thereafter, the entire Agreement is automatically terminated.”

I repeat: The Martis Valley West Parcel Operating Agreement has become a pawn, not the final puzzle piece, to protect and connect 6,000-plus acres of conservation land to the Mount Rose Wilderness.

Placer County Board of Supervisors, you have/will receive written comments and hear public testimony on the inadequacy, flaws, and lack of adequate and accurate analysis of the environmental documentation on September 13 that is so compelling you must vote to deny the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan as proposed.

Ellie Waller is a Tahoe Vista resident.