

Boarded up Meyers gas station on track to reopen



A Shell station is slated to open in Meyers at this site.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

The dilapidated, graffiti-ridden, eye-sore of what once was a gas station in Meyers could be history this time next year.

The building isn't going anywhere – but it will undergo a major remodel. The former use is staying the same; only instead of a Beacon gas station it will be a Shell. The owners are the same ones who have let the site sit in disrepair for years.

It's not a done deal, but all of this has been in the works for a while.

County staff has been working with the applicant since last fall. Sutton and Associates out of Sacramento is representing the owners, Meyers Holding Co. based in Concord. Azad Amiri is the face of Meyers Holding Co.

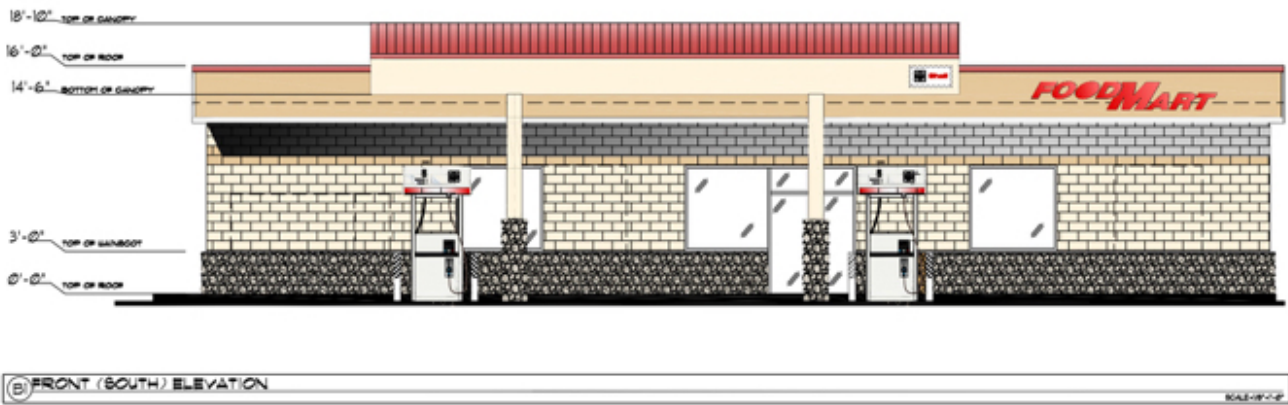
The **state in 2005** sued Amiri and Sarbjit Singh Kang, who own several gas stations, for allegedly mishandling underground storage tanks.

Regarding the Meyers location, the state Water Board spent \$1.1 million to clean up the site.

“We worked with the attorney general to request reimbursement and we received a fraction of that amount back. The state is no longer pursuing reimbursement of funds,” Lauri Kemper with the Lahontan Water Quality Control Board told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The old tanks are still in the ground and will have to be unearthed prior to the station reopening. The new ones will be installed closer to the fueling islands for better delivery access.

“Because we have to remove the tanks we cannot break ground this year. It will be next spring,” Steve Sutton with Sutton and Associates told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It won’t take long to get it done. Everything is pretty much preordered at this time, but we want issuance for the use permit, so it will be sometime next year, midsummer when we’ll be open for sales of fuel.”



A visual of what the gas station is projected to look like. Rendering/Sutton and Associates

To open, the county must issue a special use permit, which is something the Planning Commission would vote on. Their decision can be appealed to the Board of Supervisors.

“I think the best thing we can do is get the community involved. They should be writing, they should be participating,” Supervisor Sue Novasel told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The Planning Commission has allowed and not allowed things that the community has needed and wanted. The community may feel like it has its hands tied, they don’t. They need to voice their opinion one way or not.”

Because the county has never approved the Meyers Area Plan, this application comes under the outdated community plan. However, both planning documents would allow for a gas station at this location (3208 Highway 50) and both would require a special use permit.

Meyers has had three gas stations in the past; and the Shell station would make it so this enclave at the base of Echo Summit has three again.

Several residents who worked on the new area plan had hoped the location would be something more than a gas station and mini mart; something outdoorsy, and certainly a conduit to the trails in the area.

Free market, zoning and private property rights, though, are factors here.

(Novasel said the area plan's environmental documents should be released this fall.)

The county on Aug. 16 sent a letter to area agencies and government bodies notifying them about the gas station application. Comments and concerns are due at the end of the month. The county's technical advisory committee is then set to meet Sept. 18 "to take one or more of the following actions; 1) make an environmental determination, 2) determine final project conditions and/or, 3) confirm the public hearing date." That meeting is not open to the public.

In an email county planning chief Roger Trout sent to Novasel and CAO Don Ashton, he said it will be three to six months before the Planning Commission takes up the special use permit.

The email further said, "Often the public will be interested in the early steps of processing this special use permit, but it is a little early in the process for public comment. However, we would welcome members of the public informing planning of their interest in the project. They should contact the staff planner, ask questions, and ask to be added to the mailing list for the future public hearing."

The plan is to remodel the 1,900-square-foot building, have eight pumps on two islands, add interior bathrooms, a new sign, new asphalt, and removal of the old diesel pump in the back.

"It won't look like the same building when we are done with it," Sutton said.