

Sustainability leader gives primer to SLT commission

By Kathryn Reed



Making a city green or sustainable takes some green, aka cash, to make it a reality.

That was one of the key messages conveyed by Leon Churchill, city manager of Tracy.

He addressed South Lake Tahoe's Sustainability Commission on Wednesday afternoon. South Tahoe Mayor Jerry Birdwell heard Churchill speak last month at the League of California Cities meeting and believed his message should be heard locally.

Churchill's presentation touched on how funding is critical, as is buy-in from the community — the general public, businesses and economic developers.

“One thing I had to communicate to the City Council is not only do people expect sustainability, but businesses do,” Churchill said. “High-growth companies are green companies.”

He told the commission and audience that it's a city's choice to mandate sustainability or encourage it through incentives. Tracy has opted to take the incentive approach by having green builders go to the front of the line and having about 30 percent of their fees waived.

Churchill admitted Tracy's planning process had to be

redesigned as the city took on sustainability.

Claire Fortier, co-chairwoman of the local commission, asked Churchill how Tracy defined its goals.

The city manager explained that some things are somewhat automatic like land use planning, whereas other issues were handled by teams set up to talk strategy.

He further said that a city could steer behavior by using tax benefits or a penalty fee to get what it wants.

Churchill said it's important to turn emotional support of sustainable practices into financial support. He added that many resist the green-sustainable movement because of fear and false belief it will hinder economic development.

Even though going green may use dollars up front, there are long-run economic benefits " not just the environmental pluses.

Tracy has reduced its energy consumption by 40 percent by using sustainable practices.

"That's a real savings. It preserves jobs," Churchill said.

He told the commission to think about hiring a grants writer or fundraiser " someone who may take 20 percent off the top, but doesn't cost the city a penny. Another way to fund sustainability is to partner with a 501(c)3 or foundation. He said to tap into federal stimulus money, the state and consider in-kind donations.

"Make sustainability and its funding a deliberate strategy," Churchill said.

Houses selling as prices drop

The median price of single-family home in Lake Tahoe has dropped 18 percent in 2009.

Chase International's™ third quarter report also shows overall inventory is being depleted at a fast rate in the Lake Tahoe and Reno markets.

The Reno-Sparks area has seen the greatest increase in the number of units sold. Year to date, total units sold in Reno have increased 35 percent over last year, and in Sparks the increase has been 54 percent.

“These are extremely encouraging numbers for the overall health of the real estate market,” Sue Lowe, corporate vice president of Chase International, said in a press release.

The number of homes sold at the lake has increased 12 percent this year.

Chase points to the low median price being a reason houses are selling. In the Reno-Sparks area, the median price of single-family home has declined 28 percent since 2008.

Incline Village remains the most expensive basin location with an average price of a home sold in 2009 at \$1.3 million.

Council lends support to Kindertown

By Kathryn Reed



A handful of Kindertown supporters gave their spiel to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Oct. 6 in an effort to get the elected officials involved in keeping the day care-preschool open.

“If there were a better facility out there, I would take my daughter there,” Allison Borta told the council. “It’s not just day care. She does wonderful things with these kids.”

Maria Barrows-Crist, who has run the center since the 1970s, has been told by the state she must cease operating Oct. 15 because of a slew of allegations that run from drug use by employees to spilling hot soup on a child.

Two of the state’s key witnesses are former employees of Kindertown.

Barrows-Crist’s attorney is fighting the closure.

“I was contacted by several parents and interested parties over the last week regarding this closure, and I forwarded information to State Sen. Dave Cox and Assemblyman Ted Gaines asking for their review and assistance,” City Manager Dave Jinkens said in a comment posted Oct. 4 on LTN.

The council unanimously agreed to support the center remaining open until further information can be obtained. The council

directed the city attorney to gather more information.

Incline homicide victim identified

Washoe County authorities are still investigating the stabbing death of Charles Baymiller, 73, of Incline Village.

Mary Baymiller, 71, was taken to Renown Medical Center in Reno. Her condition has not been released.

The couple was found in their Lakeshore Drive home when Washoe County deputies responded to check on their welfare the night of Oct. 5.

Baymiller's cause of death will be determined pending the autopsy. Deputies do not believe this is a random act.

Detectives are asking anyone with information to call (775) 328.3320 or Secret Witness at (775) 322-4900.

SLT convention center in bankruptcy



By Kathryn Reed

Randy Lane's Lake Tahoe Development Company filed for bankruptcy Monday in regards to the largest development project ever to break ground in South Lake Tahoe.

The more than \$400 million convention center near Stateline sits idle – concrete and rebar now slightly dusted with snow.

Lane on Tuesday said this is just the next chapter of the saga that has plagued the project when financing could not be secured. He owes creditors about \$54 million.

He said he opted for Chapter 11 because this means the court will have to approve a restructuring plan with the consent of creditors. Chapter 7 would have meant the sale of assets.

With the 11-plus acre site being appraised at \$105 million in April, Lane said equity remains in the project and he is confident one day it will be a profitable endeavor.

"It's just a way for us to come up with a plan. We have a couple of new concepts we are exploring. We need the time to do that," Lane said of the months it is likely to take to settle things in federal bankruptcy court. "There are some sources of capital out there that are non-traditional. Some of them are a byproduct of the of the stimuli programs."

With the news just reaching city officials this week, they are not sure what their course of action will.

The contract doesn't have a caveat in it if the developer files for bankruptcy.

City Manager Dave Jinkens said City Attorney Patrick Enright,

who was hired to specialize in redevelopment matters, will take a look at the issue and get back to staff and the council.

Mayor Jerry Birdwell did not want to comment on the bankruptcy.

Tahoe embraces officers who broke the Dugard case



Lisa Campbell
and Ally
Jacobs talk to
South Tahoe
residents
Tuesday.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

By Kathryn Reed

“It’s so rare to have a happy ending.”

Those were the words of UC Berkeley police Officer Ally Jacobs as she spoke with a throng of people gathered Tuesday outside South Lake Tahoe City Council Chambers.

The council brought Jacobs and Lisa Campbell, UCPD special events manager, to town to honor them for their quick thinking that eventually led to the capture of Phillip and Nancy Garrido and the release of Jaycee Lee Dugard.

The two were humble – saying they were just doing their job.

This is the first time any city or entity has honored the two women together.

Even though their captain, Margo Bennett, said the duo is done doing interviews, the truth is they left Lake Tahoe Airport yesterday morning en route to Chicago to tape a segment with Oprah Winfrey. (Winfrey is itching to be the first to interview Dugard, the now 29-year-old who was freed from 18 years of captivity in an Antioch backyard after having being snatched from a Meyers bus stop in 1991.)

Jacobs, 33, was in high school in Orange County (where Dugard lived before moving with her parents to the South Shore) when Dugard was kidnapped from Lake Tahoe. She didn't know anything about the case when Garrido and two young girls walked onto the UC Berkeley campus in late August.

But Jacobs was suspicious.

"I just knew something was not right," Jacobs said of that day. "We as women get that feeling."

As the crowd dissipated and she had changed from her uniform to travel clothes, Jacobs said, "It's just weird to be called a hero. It's what I do every day."

But she also knows the importance of her intuition and police training.

"It's a huge case. It affects so many people," Jacobs said.

The Garridos' next court hearing is scheduled for Oct. 29 in El Dorado County Superior Court, Placerville.

City attorney decision delayed 2 weeks



Jacqueline Mittelstadt addresses the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Tuesday.

By Kathryn Reed

Jacqueline Mittelstadt on Tuesday may have addressed the City Council for the last time in open session as South Lake Tahoe's city attorney.

The city's legal counsel has been embroiled in a personnel brouhaha ever since she brought to light issues about how much outside legal counsel the city had retained and the bills associated with those alliances.

It was in early September on a 3-2 vote that the council decided to continue with terminating her contract. But specifics about what the council is upset with have not been disclosed.

The locks have been changed and her computer access has been taken away.

Originally the council intended to take up her employment status up in closed session. The previous week Mittelstadt had requested the matter be in closed session with a court recorder or in open session.

Issues about opening meeting laws and attorney-client privilege were brought up yesterday afternoon.

The outcome was that the council will discuss her job status Oct. 20 in closed session with a court recorder.

Patrick Enright, who was hired as assistant city attorney-redevelopment specialist, is the acting city attorney. Enright and Mittelstadt came aboard in June.

Mittelstadt is on paid administrative leave – making more than \$10,000 a month to live in Lake Tahoe. She signed a six-month lease where she is living – so through the end of November.

After the meeting she said she'd like to keep working for the city, recognizing it would be a bit rocky upon her initial return. However, she believes things can be worked out.

The two sides disagree about whether the Employer's Resource Management Association – known as ERMA complaints – need to be resolved before Mittelstadt could be terminated.

One has been filed against Mittelstadt and Enright, and subsequently Mittelstadt has filed one.

An interesting twist is the council agreed to discuss City Manager Dave Jinkens' actions in regards to personnel issues at the next meeting – Oct. 20 – in closed session.

Marijuana farm lands 3 in jail

By News 4-KRNV

Authorities in Placer County last week arrested three North Lake Tahoe residents for allegedly cultivating an illegal marijuana farm.

Placer County Sheriff's deputies charged Christopher Egger, 23, Steven Day, 48 and Mathew Steele, 28, with growing marijuana, possession of marijuana for sale and conspiracy, according to a news release issued by Sgt. John Giovannini.

[Read whole story](#)

Incline man stabbed to death, woman hospitalized

Washoe County deputies responding to a welfare check of an elderly couple on Monday night in Incline Village found one person dead and another needing medical attention.

Deputies arrived at the Lakeshore Drive condo about 8pm and located a 73 year old man who had apparently been stabbed to death. A 72 year old female was unconscious and needing medical assistance. She was transported by Care Flight to Renown Medical Center in Reno.

An autopsy is scheduled on the victim.

Investigators do not believe this was a random act.

SLTFD station relocation talk not embraced by all



SLTFD wants to relocate the station on Highway 50 near Al Tahoe Boulevard.

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Lorenzo Gigliotti is fueling a fire of discontent as he lobbies to build a firehouse and training center at Lake Tahoe Community College.

While Gigliotti addressed the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board this summer, the Lake Tahoe Community College board heard from President Paul Killpatrick on the matter the same night.

Gigliotti talked about having his department take over South

Tahoe High School's ROP fire program. He had not approached Principal Ivone Larson before that night about this, nor the instructor.

:Right now you are missing the bridge between the ROP and college," Gigliotti told the school board.

In the college board packet was a history of the floating acre. That's the piece of land Gigliotti wants the LTUSD board to sell-lease-give up. The unified district owns the acre located on LTCC property. LTCC has the discretion to approve where the floating acre exists, according to board member Roberta Mason.

"Why aren't you asking the college to use their land?" LTUSD member Sue Novasel asked the chief.

He said he was told to ask the unified board about the floating acre. Gigliotti has never given a presentation to the college board.

Before the meeting Killpatrick said he is wary of having a training facility on campus because of the surrounding forest.

The college fire academy is a collaborative effort among local agencies. No one department has ownership of it. Those close to the situation said it appears SLTFD wants to put its seal on the academy.

Plus, Lake Valley has a training facility at its station near Christmas Valley, so the need to have a second one on the South Shore is questionable. The dated burn tower still provides realistic training scenarios.

"We don't have enough structure fires to put people in there who have little or no training," Lake Valley Fire Chief Jeff Michael said of the importance of the burn tower.

Lake Valley acquired a portable from STHS so the academy has a designated classroom this fall.

"I think we have a facility we are all using now," Michael said.