

FIRST MEETING OF THE SVPSD PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

May 29, 2018 summary by Fred Ilfeld Version 1, draft #4

The SVPSD Parks and Rec Committee held its first public meeting for 4 hours during the afternoon of May 29th, 2018. Its Board members are Fred Ilfeld (chair) and Bill Hudson. The purpose of this meeting was primarily to “listen and learn,” and the agenda was divided into two parts. For the first half of the afternoon four speakers knowledgeable about parks and recreation shared their districts’ experiences in this area. Questions from attendees were invited. In the second half of the meeting community members brainstormed over where and how we in Squaw Valley might head in the realm of Parks and Rec.

In introducing this program Fred Ilfeld and Bill Hudson first acknowledged the PSD’s current efforts in P & R by being responsible for snow removal along the bike trail. Placer County plus private businesses in Squaw Valley have been funding this. Next they explained a core ground rule adopted by the Board of the PSD, namely that there will be no expenses toward P & R without revenue to meet these expenses. Any P & R projects should be financially net neutral. The Board is steadfast that water and sewer rates will not be increased to pay for park expenses.

The speakers were Andy Fisher from Placer County Parks (along with his deputy Ted Rel), Sean Barclay Tahoe City PUD General Manager (along with Board members Judy Friedman and Dan Wilkins), Mike Staudenmayer General Manager of the Northstar County Service District, and Dan Wilkins Director of Truckee Public Works. Present also were Lindsay Romack, assistant to supervisor Jennifer Montgomery, Erin Casey, senior analyst of Placer County Lake Tahoe office, and Mike Geary, General Manager of SVPSD. About 18 members of the public attended.

Andy Fisher reviewed Placer County’s Parks Master Plan that is now being finished. Priorities, as gleaned from the public survey: are more paved and dirt trails (with snow removal); having a bikeway joining western and eastern Placer; encouraging bicycle skills courses and “pump” tracks; and implementing better mapping and way-finding. He explored a number of proposals for the Tahoe area, including but not limited to completing a resort triangle trail (Tahoe City-Truckee- Kings Beach), an aquatic center, a rec center, and a covered sports pavilion. For Squaw Valley Mr. Fisher stated that the County would be more supportive of parks and trails rather than a pool or community center. He also described the multiple concentric loop hiking trails on Squaw’s mountain and other improvements within Squaw Valley that the developers of the expanded Village will be building as part of their responsibility toward providing parkland. The catch here is that Squaw's developers are not required to build these trails until pretty far along in the development process, so it would likely be many years until they are done.

As for recreation funding, Mr. Fisher pointed out that the County provides facilities (development and maintenance), but does not do recreational programming, which is up to the local agency to plan and to fund. He explained Park Dedication fees, which are one time fees for developing a project, with 15% due at lot creation and 85% due when the building permit is obtained. The fees are collected from a given geographic area (we are in Area 2, including Squaw, Alpine, and the TCPUD area). Projects are prioritized by the County, and funds can be distributed to the prioritized projects. Special Districts, schools, and county administration can apply for Park fee funds. The revenue from Park Dedication Fees in our Area #2 in recent years has in part paid for Squaw Valley bike trail and park snow removal, Tahoe City beaches, north

Tahoe beaches, and Martis area trails. Average revenue over the previous 12 years has been only \$61,453, with \$138,000 currently in the account. Proposed future development in Squaw, if it occurs, will raise these monies considerably.

Sean Barclay of TCPUD said their focus was on providing parks and recreation services for a lot of facilities, many of which they don't own. The TCPUD operates facilities owned by Placer County, TTUSD, and the State, among others. Some of these facilities include Common's Beach, Squaw Valley Park, Lake Forest Beach, Skylandia Park, Conners Field, and Pomin Park. The TCPUD does own and operate the Tahoe City Golf Course (with partners) and much of the bike trail system along the north and west shore. Parks and Recreation Department has 28 full time equivalent staff positions. Their current operating budget (without administrative overhead) is \$3.5M with revenue from their share of annual property tax (65%), user fees (17%), maintenance contracts (8%) and rental/grants/miscellaneous (10%). Of their total 2018 property tax revenue, 42% is allocated to direct operating expenses for Parks and Rec, with an additional amount being allocated for capital improvements to Parks and Rec facilities. We learned that TCPUD has been using a share of its property tax allocation as directed by the Board annually to fund its P & R operations dating back to 1947.

Mike Staudenmayer of Northstar explained that his District's priority is trails, both building and maintenance. He then spoke about the financials and operations of two of their key trail projects, the Tomkins Memorial Trail, connecting various parts of Northstar, and the Martis Valley Trail running from Truckee up to Brockway summit. A second focus for Northstar is forest fuels management.

The main financial support for Northstar's trail building is property tax. Mike felt that trails were the most appreciated community building investment they have made, with tremendous support coming from the public. In addition to property tax, Northstar receives revenue for Parks from TOT monies, park dedication fees, congestion mitigation air quality grants, a Placer County housing grant, a Community Facility District (CFD) bond, and Tahoe Mountain Resorts (master developers' non-profit arm).

Dan Wilkins from Truckee Public Works noted that Truckee is also heavily into trails. Building and maintenance monies come from grant sources, a Town special ¼% sales tax, and also developers who are required to build and maintain trails in conjunction with development projects on their property. Partnership with the Truckee Trails Foundation, a non-profit trail advocacy group provides political support for trail initiatives, as well as volunteer efforts in constructing and maintaining dirt surface trails in the Truckee area. Prior to the vote on the Town sales tax, they hired a polling company to gauge the level of support for various trail funding options and funding levels that could be supported by the community. With this information a ballot measure was placed on the 2014 ballot which resulted in a 76% approval level for the measure that required ⅔ approval.

In the second part of the meeting community members shared their hopes of what they would like to see happen in Squaw Valley for Parks and Recreation. This was a brain-storming session, an attempt to learn from one another, not an effort to move toward consensus. Here are the main suggestions for priorities in no particular order.

- SURVEY – was suggested by David Stepner to gauge voters’ appetites for a special tax for P & R purposes. Mike Geary advised that specific projects need to be placed before the public before we can ask for monies.
- MORE TRAILS – both on Valley floor, as well as the mountain, including hiking, mountain bike trails, and Nordic ski trails. (Bob Barnett, Susan Lisagor). Andy Fisher, the head of Parks for Placer County, noted that the Village at Squaw Valley developers are committed to building multiple length concentric hiking trails on Squaw’s mountain. The catch here is that Squaw's developers are not required to build these trails until pretty far along in the development process, so it would likely be many years until they are done.
- COMMUNITY CENTER - for social, recreational, physical fitness (Bob Barnett, David Stepner, Ed Heneveld). John Wilcox reminded us the SKI MUSEUM proposed to be built in the Park would have a meeting room for 100 to 200 people which would be available at little to no charge.
- LAND ACQUISITION - the procurement of open space for a broad variety of public recreational purposes (Nancy Bartusch, Ed Heneveld)
- “SWAP” OF FUNCTIONS ON DIFFERENT PARCELS OF LAND - David Stepner speculated about different locations for a future community center, the charter school, and the PSD maintenance facility.
- COVERED PAVILLION over the current field in SV Park - this would provide for field games during inclement weather and winter. Its surface could be changed from turf to hardwood to ice as desired. (Katrina Smolen, Bob Barnett) Katrina Smolen explained that in the north Tahoe Truckee area no such covered field exists. Through her newly established 501.c3, Squaw Valley Park Foundation, Kat has already submitted this project for TOT (Transient Occupancy Tax) funding to plan out the feasibility of such a project.
- UPDATING CURRENT PLAYGROUND plus a perimeter “PUMP” BIKE TRACK - (Susan Lisagor, Mike Carabetta)
- DOG PARK - (Nancy Bartsch)

Fred Ilfeld explained the process by which a Special District can request a “special tax”. Note that this is not an “assessment”, which a Special District cannot levy. Such a “special tax” must be slated for a specific project, and it has to be passed by a 2/3 vote of eligible voters in the Valley. If it passed, all property owners in the Valley would be assessed such a tax.

During this discussion several of our visiting speakers weighed in with their advice. Mike Staudenmayer suggested that with the building of trails by the ski corporation that are scheduled so far distant into the future, perhaps if there are negotiations on the legal case of the expanded Village, one bargaining point could be earlier development of trails. Erin Casey explained that there are experts we can consult about funding possibilities. She cautioned us to coordinate any

plans with regional efforts to raise monies. For example Placer County is exploring a sales tax for traffic control and trail building. Too many tax measures on a ballot will be discouraging for voters, and none may pass. Sean Barclay reminded us that it is very expensive to operate parks and recreation in terms of staff and the time and energy involved. Judy Friedman, TCPUD Board member, recommended that we identify specific needs and then search out with whom we might collaborate on these needs. We should figure out how our programs fit into the region so we can work collaboratively and not have duplication of effort. Lindsay Romack noted that there are existing turf fields in the Tahoe Basin, such as in the North Tahoe regional park, that could be covered for winter use, as an alternative to the Squaw Valley field.

We learned in the first part of the meeting that successful P & R programs of other Special Districts have been achieved with at least three attributes. First, they focused on one or two priorities and did not try to provide a broad range of services. They did not spread themselves too thin. Second, the local community of a given District had to enthusiastically support these priorities. Third, there were multiple sources of funding.

Going forward our own PSD P&R committee plans to draft a Mission Statement and to explore with ongoing public input what sort of focus meets our particular needs in Squaw Valley. Any project brought before the PSD Board will need to have broad community support and a pathway for funding it.