



BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, March 3, 2010 – 8:30 a.m.
Tahoe City Public Utility District

FINAL MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: Alex Mourelatos, Ron McIntyre, Jennifer Merchant, Ron Parson, Deb Dudley, Phil GilanFarr, Julie Regan, Tom Murphy (8:45 a.m.), and Kali Kopley (8:45 a.m.)

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Steve Teshara, Kym Fabel, Andy Chapman, Sally Lyon, Ron Treabess, and Sarah Holster

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Clayton Jacobs and Steve Kastan

1.0 CALL TO ORDER – ESTABLISH A QUORUM

1.1 The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairman Alex Mourelatos and a quorum was established.

2.0 PUBLIC FORUM

2.1 Andy Chapman introduced Clayton Jacobs, an intern visiting from South Africa with a group of 11 young entrepreneurs focused on the hospitality industry. The group received a grant as part of the US Bureau of Education through Sierra Nevada College and the University of Nevada, Reno. Mr. Jacobs is working on a business plan for a Destination Management Organization (DMO) for the purpose of selling vacations in South Africa. The Board welcomed Mr. Jacobs to the meeting.

3.0 AGENDA AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL

3.1 **M/S/C (Parson/GilanFarr) (6/0) to approve the agenda with the flexibility to add an item under D5 for discussion and possible action on further Board direction to staff related to the presentation on Marketing Committee recommendations for the Web site.**

4.0 CONSENT CALENDAR

4.1 **M/S/C (Parson/Dudley) (8/0) to approve the consent calendar as presented.**

5.0 STATUS REPORT/BOARD DISCUSSION AND INPUT ON UPDATING THE NLTRA INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION INTEGRATED WORK PLAN FOR FY-2010/2011

- 5.1 Ron Treabess reported on the update process for the NLTRA Infrastructure and Transportation Integrated Work Plan (IWP) for FY-2010/11. The purpose of the IWP is to be used as a planning tool for the organization. Input provided by the Joint Committee at its last meeting in February has been incorporated into the draft document. A public workshop is scheduled to be held at the Tahoe City Public Utility District on Monday, March 8, 2010 beginning at 3:00 p.m. The purpose of the workshop is to get feedback from the community and our partner organizations on the plan. The comments from today and the workshop will also be incorporated into the document. Ron reported on changes to the priority list. The second bullet point now includes Highway 267 and reads, *Transit System providing half-hour headways year round on the Resort Triangle main routes (Hwy. 28 along the North Shore, and Hwys. 89 & 267 to Truckee) in daytime, and at nighttime during winter and summer peaks.* The 7th bullet item now specifies that the organization should *complete smaller projects, such as bus shelters, interpretive/information signage, traffic calming measures, bike racks, public rest rooms, etc., that can be advanced and completed in a reasonable timeframe.* Ron reported that the 8th bullet item related to “green” considerations when approving funds for projects has been moved to the introduction of the plan.
- 5.2 Ron highlighted items on the project list for Transportation (B). He reported that TART is projecting the need for another increase in funding for baseline services in addition to an increase in operational and maintenance costs. Discussion followed in regards to the need to maintain TART baseline services.
- 5.2.1 Ron McIntyre expressed concern that voter approval of TOT would be affected if we continue to use more infrastructure funds for transportation. It was noted that this year’s infrastructure funds were frozen by Placer County and may be taken by the County for purposes other than infrastructure. Ron feels we need to understand how this will impact future infrastructure projects since this might discourage voters from renewing the tax. He said that once available infrastructure funding is known, then we can make decisions on transportation. Ron McIntyre suggested we poll the community to determine the needs in order to position ourselves for the election. Jennifer agreed that we need to poll the community. She noted we should already have some data available based on the surveys that were conducted last year. Jennifer took exception to the phrase that the County is “taking” the money for services. She said services are provided to eastern Placer County and some of them were supported by the NLTRA, such as snow removal. Ron McIntyre clarified that we need to be able to assure the voters that at least 50% of the infrastructure funds are being used for infrastructure projects. Steve noted that unless the TOT election is for a special tax, requiring a two thirds majority vote, the voters do not consider a specific expenditure plan.
- 5.2.2 Alex Mourelatos said we historically allocate funds based on specific percentages; marketing (42%), infrastructure (47%) and transportation

(11%). Every year the NLTRA goes through a planning process to allocate funds from infrastructure to transportation. He said we need to agree on a balance between capital improvements versus subsidizing transportation. Jennifer Merchant reminded everyone the percentages were established the first year of the organization and haven't changed. Several years ago, the NLTRA was successful in getting the County to agree to allow infrastructure funds to be spent on transportation which was supported by the community. She said during contract negotiations we could discuss the possibility of renegotiating the percentages for transportation and infrastructure. Alex said the Board needs to affirm whether it is appropriate to continue to allocate funds from infrastructure to transportation. Ron McIntyre agreed and said whatever the outcome; we need to educate the community on our decision.

- 5.2.3 Alex expressed concern that one of the priorities is to establish half hour headways year round on the Resort Triangle main routes, but we are struggling to maintain baseline services. Steve Teshara said staff is meeting with the County and other transportation representatives to prepare an analysis of current transit services and costs. For example, it has been suggested to reduce 30 minute service to hourly along the North Shore to provide service on Highway 267. Deb Dudley said we need to poll the community to determine needs in order to structure the ballot measure. Steve noted that last year's survey showed that transportation remains a high priority for the community. Ron Treabess reported that he will have an opportunity to poll community members at next week's workshop. Steve reminded the Board that there is an effort to pursue federal funding for transit services within the Tahoe Basin.
- 5.3 Ron reviewed infrastructure projects (A List). He said anticipated projects coming forward this year are highlighted in the draft document. Steve said project proponents who foresee their projects going past 2012 have become advocates for the 2% TOT Tax renewal election. Alex asked Ron to clarify how staff reaches project estimates. Ron said the number is based on discussions with the project proponent, the total project costs and historical funding for similar projects. He reiterated his earlier comments that the document is a planning tool. Ron McIntyre noted that item A-17, the Tahoe City Visitor Center/Fire Station Site Expansion/Redevelopment, needs to be updated to reflect a longer timeframe. Steve reported there has been communication from the Tahoe City Public Utility District on beginning the planning process this year.
- 5.4 Discussion followed in regards to Infrastructure projects.
 - 5.4.1 Kali Kopley asked about the timeline to approve the document. Ron said once the information is gathered at the community workshop and today's meeting, staff will prepare a final draft document for approval at the next Joint Committee meeting on March 29th with final Board approval on April 7th.
 - 5.4.2 Ron Parson said our infrastructure should tie-in to our marketing efforts. Ron Treabess agreed and said infrastructure and transportation projects are great marketing tools. Ron Parson suggested we consider who

transportation is serving when making transit decisions. The analysis should include the impacts of transit cuts on businesses. He said several of his employees are not able to use transit due to scheduling limitations. Ron said the airport shuttle is working well for business, but expressed concern with the level of subsidy. He feels the service should break even. In addition, Ron Parson suggested that the infrastructure process have better direction. For example, if bike trails are our priority, then we need to develop a master plan that includes all potential bike trails. He would prefer to have direction and cohesiveness instead of funding projects sporadically. Jennifer agreed and said this would be a good topic for the Board retreat.

- 5.5 Alex summarized direction to staff as follows; to bring back a historical trend on funding for transportation and infrastructure, prepare an analysis on transportation baseline services, continue discussion on dichotomy between achieving half hour headways versus achieving year round service on the Resort Triangle. He also asked staff to prepare an updated airport shuttle business plan for review and discussion. Ron McIntyre said the Denver airport shuttle is profitable and should be considered as a model for our airport shuttle service.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 31, 2010 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

- 6.1 Sally Lyon reported that the Finance Committee met on Monday, March 1st and recommended approval of the January 31, 2010 Financial Statements. The Committee is currently in the process of reviewing four audit proposals. She noted that preliminary numbers indicate that 2nd quarter TOT is up for the quarter as compared to the same quarter last year.

- 6.2 M/S/C (Merchant/McIntyre) (8/0) to approve the January 31, 2010 Financial Statements.**

7.0 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO AMEND NLTRA BUDGET FOR FY-2009/2010 TO INCLUDE THE \$150,000 IN FY-2008/2009 TOT BALANCE FORWARD (CARRYOVER FUNDS) AS FUNDING ALLOCATED TO MARKETING

- 7.1 Sally Lyon reported on the amendment to the NLTRA budget for FY-2009/2010 to include the \$150,000 in FY-2008/2009 TOT balance forward (carryover) as funding allocated to Marketing. The Finance Committee recommended the Board approve the \$150,000 in fund balance carryover as an amendment to the current year NLTRA budget.

- 7.2 M/S/C (Parson/McIntyre) (7/0/1 Abstention-Merchant) to approve amendment to NLTRA budget for FY 2009/2010 to include the \$150,000 in FY-2008/2009 TOT balance forward (carryover) as funding allocated to Marketing.**

8.0 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORT

- 8.1 Kym Fabel reported that the Community Awards Dinner was well attended. Pictures taken from the event will be forwarded to award recipients along with

script notes. She noted the event was featured in the Bonanza, Moonshine Ink and Sierra Sun newspapers.

- 8.2 The SnowFest Kick-off mixer is scheduled to be held at Garwood's on Thursday, March 4th. The calendar of events is available at www.TahoeSnowFestival.com. Alex Mourelatos encouraged the Board to participate in the Joe King Poker Tournament scheduled to be held at the Tahoe Biltmore on Friday, March 12th beginning at 7:00 p.m. For tickets call the North Tahoe Business Association office at 546-9000.
- 8.3 Kym reported that the North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce is partnering with Placer County Assessor's Office to host a free workshop on business property statements. The workshop is scheduled to be held at the North Tahoe Events Center on Tuesday, March 9th beginning at 2:00 p.m. The Chamber is also partnering with the Sierra Human Resources Association to host a Social Media Workshop at the Cedar House Sports Hotel on Wednesday, March 10th.

9.0 MARKETING REPORT

- 9.1 Andy Chapman reported that the Joint Chamber/Marketing Committee workshop is scheduled to be held at the North Tahoe Events Center (NTEC) on Tuesday, March 23rd beginning at 2:00 p.m. The Marketing Committee/Community workshop will be held at NTEC on Tuesday, March 30th from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. The purpose of the workshops is to receive feedback on the NLTRA's marketing direction.
- 9.2 Andy reviewed Web site updates. As directed by the Board last month, staff brought discussions to the Marketing Committee. Outcomes from that meeting include the need to assess and possibly reduce copy on the GoTahoeNorth Web site, in addition to a tracking analysis to determine how people are using the site. The committee suggested the possibility of changing Resorts and Towns to *Ski Resorts and Towns*. The agency has already begun to address this by adding a Skiing and Boarding link to the top navigation bar. The committee suggested surveying Web site users to determine whether the site should be designed to drive first time visitation or make it a resource for multiple users. Currently 85% of visitors to the site are first time users. Andy distributed a Web project overview sheet. Projects completed in the last 90 days include hiring a content manager to update content on the Web site, the ability to sort Cool Deals by date and location, and the integration of social media tools. Short term projects to be completed before the end of the fiscal year include event calendar content and layout, the integration of video and podcasts, adding event related Cool Deals, addressing the photo images for lodging, and improving the dining sort. Andy highlighted long term projects which include dividing the site by season and an overall assessment of the Web site's look, feel, content, usability and navigation. The intent is to bring back a Web site plan with project timeframes and costs.
- 9.3 Discussion followed in regards to Web site updates.
 - 9.3.1 Alex Mourelatos asked about the level of effort to enlarge lodging photos. Andy said the work/programming falls into the maintenance end of our contract. All properties are listed, but not all have photos. Deb asked the

Board to consider the trade off of enlarging photos versus long loading times. She said Northstar suggested the page should be a portal for visitors to click through to the properties. She feels it is important to ask our constituents how the site is serving them. Kali Kopley agreed and suggested adding mapping capabilities. Andy said the committee has directed staff to research customized mapping options. Jennifer said the lodging pictures are too small and don't allow the user to search by rating. Andy said Web sites are very subjective. Last week 70,000 unique visitors came to the site with 50% going to individual property sites. Alex said that although we cannot measure bookings, it is a compelling statistic. Andy confirmed that photo size can be addressed if it is a Board priority. Ron McIntyre said we need to be responsive to Board member suggestions as it relates to the Web site. Alex agreed but said all suggestions need to be reviewed as part of a broader strategy. Deb said every action has a reaction. The lodging properties say that the majority of Web traffic to their sites comes from the GoTahoeNorth Web site. We need to understand how changes will impact the site, especially as it relates to search engine optimization. Andy said the debate is how much information on the destination we offer to a visitor before they click through to lodging properties.

- 9.3.2 Tom Murphy said the goal is to put heads in beds. The Web site is our most "nimble" marketing tool and should be reactionary. He expressed concern that issues cannot be addressed in a short period of time. Alex said that we need to determine whether one specific request is worth the level of effort to change the Web site. He said a comprehensive plan is important to review, and decide as a Board, on specific action.
- 9.3.3 Phil GilanFarr said the home page should feature current weather, events and deals. He said the "n" should take you back to the homepage no matter where you are on the site. Andy confirmed that staff is working with the agency to include current information on the homepage. Kali feels the "back" feature is important for users and should be addressed quickly. Steve noted the project overview sheet lists a number of items to be completed by the end of the fiscal year. Kali suggested staff prioritize projects on the list so the Board understands the timeframe for each project completion. Alex suggested the Marketing Committee take the lead on prioritizing projects that emphasize conversion. Alex asked staff to discuss our priorities with the agency to find out what can be completed in two weeks. Andy said he would work with the agency to determine the best use of resources within that timeframe. Kali summarized Board priorities as follows: the "back" feature, homepage updates, addressing the property photo size, short term projects such as video and researching mapping options (including welcoming features). Julie Regan said Board direction as it relates to the Web site has shifted overtime. She it is hard to design a Web site by committee and suggested the Board give staff and the agency flexibility to make it work.
- 9.3.4 Andy reminded the Board that the GoTahoeNorth Web site won Best Destination Web site in the State of California as judged by our peers in the California Travel and Tourism Commission.

10.0 ACTIVITY REPORT

- 10.1 Ron Treabess reported that no subsidy was necessary for the North Lake Tahoe Express airport shuttle in December. In January, ridership and revenue was up 20%. Ron also reported that NLTRA Infrastructure projects approved at the February 23rd Placer County Board of Supervisors meeting included bike trail signage, TART bus shelter upgrades, and the Bear Box project.

11.0 PRESIDENT AND CEO'S REPORT

- 11.1 Steve Teshara confirmed that the Board/Management Team workshop is scheduled to be held at Granlibakken on Tuesday, March 9th beginning at 8:30 a.m. Staff will send out the agenda prior to the meeting.
- 11.2 Steve outlined the four documents that are part of the Regional Plan Initiative (RPI) package to be submitted to the TRPA Governing Board. These include the *Final Report of Sustainability Measures Lake Tahoe Watershed, Nevada & California*; *Tahoe Redevelopment Case Study: Feasibility Analysis Revitalization and Reinvestment Opportunities Regulation and Code Analysis and Recommendations*; the *Lake Tahoe EIP 2010-2020: An Economic Analysis of Private Source Stormwater BMP Expenditures on Redevelopment Projects*; and the *Load Reduction Planning Tool – Lake Tahoe Watershed, Nevada & California*. Steve said we are collaborating with our partners and TRPA management to present these reports to the Governing Board in a presentation scheduled for March 25th. Julie Regan reported that she is working with Harmon Zuckerman at TRPA on packaging these documents for the Governing Board for informational purposes. She said there will be several milestone meetings for the purpose of policy direction. Steve said each RPI document has specific recommendations for the Regional Plan Update. Jennifer said this is an excellent initiative, but expressed concern that the County has not reviewed the documents. Steve said each document has had a steering committee that has provided input into the process. He confirmed that the documents will be distributed to the NLTRA Board and Placer County. Jennifer requested an expense report associated with this effort including research and planning funds.
- 11.3 Steve reported that the first draft of the Placer County Economic Development Strategy did not meet our standards. A letter was prepared and submitted which outlined our concerns. A redline version of the strategy has now been drafted and reflects substantial changes. The Economic Development Board met for special session this week and adopted the revised version. In doing so, the Board confirmed that it is a living document and will continue to evolve. The document is scheduled to be presented at the Economic Development Breakfast in Lincoln on March 17th.
- 11.4 Steve submitted a list of preliminary projects as recommended by the Lake Tahoe Federal Advisory Committee as part of Round 11 Tahoe Program/SNPLMA package. He noted that there will be a public comment period on the list of proposed projects. Steve highlighted projects in the package that would positively affect the North Shore, including Basin wide transportation,

forest restoration, erosion control (region wide), the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program, and the backyard conservation program (BMP).

- 11.5 Steve announced that the NLTRA and North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce are among those organizations in California to receive the Inaugural State Parks Grassroots Champion Award for our efforts on behalf of California State Parks. He said there is a ballot initiative going forward to better position California State Parks for funding.

12.0 DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

- 12.1 Jennifer Merchant said Placer County is hosting focus groups to solicit feedback from the community on the Regional Plan Update. They will provide some ongoing input as part of first phase of Milestone meetings. She plans to request a presentation to the NLTRA Board on those efforts in April or May.
- 12.2 Julie Regan reported that TRPA Executive Director Joanne Marchetta recently attended a Senate Committee hearing on the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act which would fund the federal share of Phase II Environmental Improvement Program. She said Lake Tahoe was part of a larger discussion related to the other Great Water Bodies of the U.S. She said it was a clear message from our delegation that Tahoe should be a national priority. Julie reported that TRPA would like to provide an update to the NLTRA Board on the Aquatic Invasive Species effort and changes planned for this summer. Steve noted our chamber has made a commitment to help get the word out on the AIS program. Julie reported that TRPA is working with the Conservation District to hire Smith and Jones to develop a marketing campaign for AIS program. Steve added that Truckee River Foundation has issued a grant to the Tahoe Resource Conservation District to start an inspection program for other regional lakes. Phil said we need to focus on keeping boats in the water instead encouraging boaters to remove their boats onto trailers.

13.0 MEETING REVIEW AND STAFF DIRECTION

- 13.1 Staff will work with the Chair to prepare an agenda for the upcoming Board Retreat. Staff will bring back the final draft Integrated Work Plan for approval at the next meeting. Staff will bring back a plan and update on Web site project timeframes and costs.

14.0 ADJOURNMENT

- 14.1 The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Submitted by,
Sarah Holster
Executive Assistant