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October 17, 2006

Vista Village project reaches out for information

By **Joanna Hartman**
Sierra Sun

October 13, 2006

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Nearly 200 chairs were filled Wednesday evening with North Tahoe locals of different sizes, shapes and colors voicing their questions, concerns and support of a proposed affordable housing project in Tahoe Vista.

Developer Pacific West Communities, the Mourelatos family, which owns the 12-acre property, and the Workforce Housing Association of Truckee Tahoe hosted the forum at Kings Beach Elementary in effort to determine specific housing needs as they finalize the site plan for the proposed Vista Village.

Community members spoke out about concerns with infrastructure, traffic and water and sewer services.

"[I'm] not against workforce housing," said Tahoe Vista resident Karen Van Epps, "but you can't put all of it in one little town."

Individuals shared personal anecdotes, reasons why they were forced to relocate or make a lengthy commute and frustrations with the high cost of living.

Others expressed their need for affordable rents or their desires to purchase a home in Tahoe.

"[We] want to hear about Alex's [Mourelatos] project, to make building houses cheaper in this place — more affordable for poor people, maybe," said Benjamin Machuca, a Crystal Bay resident for nine years with five children in Incline Village schools.

In a letter shared at the meeting, former North Shore resident Jamos Purtill said the housing now being proposed for the basin is overdue.

"We love Tahoe and are still sad we had to move [to Nevada City] ... If there had been some kind of affordable housing, we would have been able to stay and have a better chance of providing a good life for our new son," Purtill wrote.

Vista Village, formerly called Cedar Grove, is proposed on a 12-acre undeveloped parcel that the Mourelatos family owns at the end of Toyon Road and Grey Lane off National Avenue in Tahoe Vista. The property is large enough, according to Pacific West Communities, to accommodate 50 to 150 housing units for North Tahoe's workforce, including both homes for rent and for purchase.

Vista Village is in its design phase to develop the final project proposal including number, type and configuration of the units. The project is currently in the regulatory processes of Placer County and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Mourelatos said he was pleased with the feedback he, WHATT and Pacific West Communities received from the community. They will incorporate the expressed needs of the workforce community, such as mixed housing types, recreation paths and trails, open space and on-site property management, in developing the final site plan in the next couple weeks.

Pacific West Communities built Gray's Crossing and the Alder Drive affordable housing projects in Truckee and more than 40 developments in other resort and mountain communities including Jackson Hole, Mammoth, Breckenridge and Missoula.

Sierra Sun graphic

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Vista Village is proposing both rental and for-purchase homes in a 12-acre parcel off National Avenue in Tahoe Vista.

Vista Village rental housing will likely serve households earning less than \$45,00 per year, with rent approximately \$770-\$1,200 each month for two and three-bedroom units with property management controlling the number of people living in each apartment.

Vista Village housing for purchase will likely serve those households earning \$60,000 to \$120,000 and sell for approximately \$120,000 to \$600,000. They will be deed restricted.

The total configuration of how many and what types of units has not yet been determined, but will take into consideration community input.

Contact Alex Mourelatos at (530)546-9500 or Andrea Clark at (760)920-1162 for questions or feedback.

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