WASHOE COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Minutes

June 6, 2013

The regular meeting of the Washoe County Board of Adjustment was scheduled for Thursday, June 6, 2013 at 1:30 p.m., in the Washoe County Commission Chambers, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.

1. Determination of Quorum

Chair Wideman called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. The following members and staff were present:

Members present: Robert Wideman, Chair
Richard "R.J." Cieri
Lee Lawrence
Kim Toulouse
Philip Horan

Members absent: None

Staff present: William Whitney, Director, Planning & Development
Eric Young, PhD, Planner, Planning & Development
Sandra Monsalvè, Senior Planner, Planning & Development
Grace Sannazzaro, Planner, Planning & Development
Roger Pelham, Senior Planner, Planning & Development
Greg Salter, Deputy District Attorney, District Attorney’s Office
Dawn Spinola, Recording Secretary, Planning & Development

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Member Cieri led the pledge to the flag.

3. Ethics Law Announcement

Deputy District Attorney (DDA) Salter recited the Ethics Law standards.
4. Appeal Procedure

Mr. Whitney recited the appeal procedure for items heard before the Board of Adjustment.

5. Public Comment

As there was no response to the call for public comment, Chair Wideman closed the public comment period.

6. Approval of Agenda

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, Member Toulouse moved to approve the agenda of June 6, 2013 as written. The motion, seconded by Member Cieri, passed unanimously.

7. Approval of Minutes

Member Cieri moved to approve the minutes of April 4, 2013 as written. The motion was seconded by Member Lawrence and passed three in favor and none opposed, Members Horan and Toulouse abstaining as they had not been in attendance at that meeting.

8. Consider and Adopt a Resolution Commending R.J. Cieri for His Service to Washoe County

Approved unanimously. The members thanked R.J. and commended him for his leadership, professionalism and service to the citizens.

9. Planning Items and Public Hearings

Agenda Item 9A

PUBLIC HEARING: Administrative Permit Case No. AP13-003 – Lake Tahoe SummerFest – To approve an administrative permit and outdoor community event business license for the Lake Tahoe SummerFest, an outdoor concert event to be held at the Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village, Nevada on August 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, and 18, 2013. The proposed outdoor concerts will be held between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. on August 2, 3, 9, 10, 16 and 17, 2013 (Fridays and Saturdays) and between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on August 4, 11 and 18, 2013 (Sundays). The concerts will be unamplified classical music venues located within a portable tent erected on the College for the event. Primary participant and spectator parking will be within the College campus, with additional off-site (overflow) parking at the IVGID Recreation Facility, if needed. Event organizers estimate that approximately 1,300 participants and spectators will take part in the event during any one three-day event period, with a maximum of 500 participants and spectators on any one day of the event. Based on the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing, to include the report of reviewing agencies, the Board of Adjustment may approve the issuance of the administrative permit and business license with conditions, or deny the application.

- Applicant: Lake Tahoe SummerFest – Georgette Porter.
- Property Owner: Sierra Nevada College
- Location: 948 Incline Way, Incline Village, NV 89451
- Assessor’s Parcel No: 127-040-10 (College) and 127-040-07 (IVGID Recreation Center)
• Parcel Size: 17.05 acres (College), 1.4 acres (Recreation Center)
• Master Plan Category: Commercial
• Regulatory Zone: Public and Semi-Public Facilities (PSP).
• Area Plan: Tahoe
• Citizen Advisory Board: IVCB
• Development Code: Authorized in Article 310, Temporary Uses and Structures, and WCC Chapter 25, Business License Ordinance
• Commission District: 1 – Commissioner Berkbiger
• Section/Township/Range: Section 23, T16N, R18E, MDM, Washoe County, NV
• Staff: Eric Young, PhD, Planner
• Phone: 775.328.3613
• Email: eyoung@washoe county.us

Chair Wideman opened the public hearing.

Mr. Young reviewed the staff report. He reported the application was virtually identical to the one submitted last year and the approved event had gone smoothly. Reviewing agencies had authorized staff to remove or repeat comments and conditions submitted the prior year.

Member Horan noted he was a resident of the area and had not heard any negative comments from the community regarding the event.

Chair Wideman closed the public hearing and asked if the members had anything to disclose. None did.

Member Toulouse moved to approve Administrative Permit Case No. AP13-003 – Lake Tahoe SummerFest. The motion was seconded by Member and passed unanimously.

The motion was based on the following findings:

1. **Consistency.** That the proposed use is consistent with the action programs, policies, standards and maps of the Master Plan, Tahoe Area Plan and the Incline Village Tourist Community Plan;

2. **Improvements.** That adequate utilities, roadway improvements, sanitation, water supply, drainage, and other necessary facilities have been provided, the proposed improvements are properly related to existing and proposed roadways, and an adequate public facilities determination has been made in accordance with Division Seven;

3. **Site Suitability.** That the site is physically suitable for an outdoor concert series and for the intensity of such a development;

4. **Issuance Not Detrimental.** That issuance of the permit will not be significantly detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare; injurious to the property or improvements of adjacent properties; or detrimental to the character of the surrounding area; and

5. **Effect on a Military Installation.** Issuance of the permit will not have a detrimental effect on the location, purpose or mission of the military installation.
Agenda Item 9B

PUBLIC HEARING: Special Use Permit Case No. SB13-008 - De La Luz Horse Racing Events
- To establish an equestrian facility for hosting horse racing events. Proposed events will consist of horse racing only. No commercial boarding stables or new structures are proposed.

- Applicant/Property Owner: Hilaria De La Luz
- Project Location: 6205 Grass Valley Road, Palomino Valley
- Assessor's Parcel No: 076-340-13
- Parcel Size: +40.13 acres
- Master Plan Category: Rural (R)
- Regulatory Zone: General Rural Agricultural (GRA)
- Area Plan: Warm Springs
- Citizen Advisory Board: Warm Springs
- Development Code: Article 302, Allowed Uses and Article 810, Special Use Permits
- Commission District: 5 – Commissioner Weber
- Section/Township/Range: Section 19, T23N, R21E, MDM, Washoe County, NV
- Staff: Grace Sannazzaro, Planner
- Phone: 775.328.3771
- Email: gsannazzaro@washoeCounty.us

Chair Wideman opened the public hearing.

Ms Sannazzaro reviewed the staff report.

Member Cieri noted a similar prior case had several regulations covering food vendors and safety considerations. Ms. Sannazzaro reviewed the conditions proposed for the case being heard and pointed out the similarities between the two.

Veronica Cortez spoke on behalf of the owner as the applicant for permits in prior years. She acknowledged there had been infractions in the past but they were steadily improving their processes to meet code.

Tom Scoggin stated he owned the property across the road and the number of spectators and events would be detrimental, as they would damage the roads and cause problems with dust and noise. He opined it was unsuitable to allow a business on the property.

Chair Wideman dosed the public hearing and asked if any Board members wished to provide disclosures. None did.

Member Horan expressed concern with the dramatic jump in the number of events and spectators. He suggested they consider an increase in numbers, but perhaps not to the extent being requested.

Member Cieri explained to Mr. Scoggin there were complaint and enforcement avenues available should the applicant not comply with the conditions. He agreed with Member Horan the increase in numbers would create a significant impact but noted that was the responsibility of the Palomino General Improvement District (PVGID) and he was sure they had had an opportunity to comment.
Member Lawrence noted that only two property owners had responded negatively. He stated he would have expected more input if the neighborhood felt it impacted them.

Member Toulouse opined the project may not be in line with the Warm Springs Area Plan and the Land Use and Transportation Element of County code. He brought up the fact there had been prior infractions and were now asking for approval for a much larger event, and he felt that was impactful. He expressed concerns with traffic in the case of a fire. Ms. Sannazzaro explained PVGID had imposed conditions and the road would easily accommodate two-way traffic. She acknowledged it might be more challenging in the case of a fire truck attempting to drive in while car traffic was driving out.

Chair Wideman stated he could not find anything inconsistent that would cause him to want to stop the applicant from using his property in a lawful manner. He reiterated that the agencies, including PVGID and Fire, had had an opportunity to weigh in and mitigate any issues. He did not want to superimpose his judgment over theirs.

Chair Wideman opined the applicant would be subject to a substantial financial commitment in following the conditions and hoped he was prepared for that. Chair Wideman hoped the applicant could keep up with that so it didn’t become a Code Enforcement item. He indicated he was in support of the project.

Member Cieri moved to approve conditionally Special Use Permit Case No. SB13-008 - De La Luz Horse Racing Events. The motion was seconded by Chair Wideman and passed by a vote of four in favor and Member Toulouse against.

The motion was based on the following findings:

1. **Consistency.** That the proposed use is consistent with the action programs, policies, standards and maps of the Master Plan and the Warm Springs Area Plan;

2. **Improvements.** That adequate utilities, roadway improvements, sanitation, water supply, drainage, and other necessary facilities have been provided, the proposed improvements are properly related to existing and proposed roadways, and an adequate public facilities determination has been made in accordance with Division Seven;

3. **Site Suitability.** That the site is physically suitable for equestrian events, and for the intensity of such a development;

4. **Issuance Not Detrimental.** That issuance of the permit will not be significantly detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare; injurious to the property or improvements of adjacent properties; or detrimental to the character of the surrounding area; and;

5. **Effect on a Military Installation.** Issuance of the permit will not have a detrimental effect on the location, purpose or mission of the military installation.

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**Agenda Item 9C**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Variance Case No VA13-002 - Ellis – To vary the minimum lot size requirements to allow livestock on a property less than one-half (.5) acre in size.

- Applicant/Property Owner    Ronald S. and Frances P. Ellis
Chair Wideman opened the public hearing.

Ms. Monsalvè reviewed the staff report, expounding on the fact the findings could not be made for a variance, as there were no special circumstances.

Applicant’s Representative Luke Busby, Esq., stated Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) granted the Board the authority to approve the request if they chose to do so. He opined the staff report did not take into consideration conditions that would have been imposed to alleviate concerns.

Mr. Busby noted the property was originally zoned as Suburban Farm Agricultural and it was within an equestrian area in which numerous properties have horses. The streets have equestrian-themed names.

Mr. Busby explained staff had stated they were unable to verify if the applicant had been informed that horses were allowed at the time they purchased the home. The Multiple Listing Service (MLS) advertisement indicating it was horse property was attached to the variance application as Exhibit 1.

Mr. Busby went on to provide evidence the Health Department complaint had been investigated and closed with no action taken against the applicants. He pointed out it was difficult to rationalize that the applicant’s horses could be detrimental to the public good as there were other horses in the neighborhood. He referenced a map that had been provided to the Board members, indicating the property owners that were in support of the variance request and also properties with horses and the number of horses on those lots.

Mr. Busby pointed out staff concedes the application of findings in the case is strict and that there are no special circumstances that are applicable. He stated they disagreed, that their situation fit into the statutory definition of special circumstance, as the property was unique and they were being deprived of a use that had been granted to many of the neighbors.

Mr. Busby noted none of the reviewing agencies objected to approval of the request, including the Health Department, supporting their belief staff’s conclusion that granting the variance would create a substantial detriment to public good had no basis.
Mr. Busby stated two letters against the variance and 14 in support had been received from the public. Three more letters of support had been obtained since submittal of the application.

Mr. Busby addressed complaints submitted in the letters. One had been about odor. He repeated there were already horses in the neighborhood and opined removing the applicant's horses was not going to solve the problem. There is a tack shed in the yard that has been there for years, indicating it has historically been used for horses. Regarding the complaint about flies, if the Health Department had felt there was a problem, it would have been addressed. Regarding dust, the horses were kept in a corral in the back and were not being used for continuous activity at that location. He replied to the concern about the horse's well being by stating they were well loved and cared for.

Mr. Busby opined that if the County thought .5 acres was enough for horses then .48 acres ought to be sufficient. He felt zoning laws should not be used by neighbors to fight with each other over technicalities, as any property may have violations if you observed them closely enough. The variance was an option to provide rationality and common sense to the process and that was all the applicant was requesting.

Mr. Busby addressed the findings, noting that Washoe County code allows the Board to grant Variances in exceptional circumstances or conditions that affect the property. A strict application of code would cause them undue hardship as they would be forced to move or get rid of their family pets. He displayed a photograph of one of the applicant's daughters with one of their horses.

Mr. Busby opined staff stated the standard that was in the statute, but did not state exactly what the substantial detriment was. He reiterated the other horses in the neighborhood were no more substantially detrimental than the applicant's. Removing the applicant's horses would not solve the problem. He felt the same applied to the finding of special privilege. Other neighbors had horses, many supported the applicants in their request and it was consistent with the character of the area.

Mr. Busby acknowledged the use was not authorized, that was the reason for the variance request. He reiterated the application would be strict and Code provided the Board with the ability to grant relief in circumstances such as the one being discussed, where common sense should prevail. They were so close to the .5-acre requirement the applicant did not believe it was fair to be denied a privilege granted to many of the neighbors. He stated the applicants were happy to comply with any conditions.

Member Cieri requested clarification that the applicants purchased the property with the belief that horses were allowed. Mr. Busby confirmed that was correct.

Chair Wideman noted a copy of the MLS advertisement for the property stating that horses were not allowed. Mr. Busby provided another ad that indicated they were.

Mike Railey, Derek Wilson and Pat Scheffer spoke in opposition. Mr. Railey opined no hardship existed so an approval would constitute granting of special privileges. Mr. Scheffer described how manure odor, dust and insects are affecting his family's lifestyle and Mr. Wilson pointed out that no property in that specific neighborhood was zoned for or had horses.

Chair Wideman closed the public hearing and asked if any Board members wished to provide disclosures. None did.
Member Horan stated he could not find any reason to support the application. Code states the property must be .5 acres to have livestock, and if they were to approve this reduction, they would not reasonably be able to hold other property owners to that standard in the future.

Member Toulouse agreed. He expressed empathy and sympathy for the applicant but could not make the findings. He suggested the applicants speak to the listing agent who had indicated horses were allowed.

Member Cieri asked Counsel if an approval would be unique to the parcel and would not extend to the region. DDA Salter said that was correct, but for a time it could be viewed as granting of a special privilege, since other people in the neighborhood would not be allowed to have horses without also requesting a variance. Member Cieri agreed but opined it was their job to look at and make sense of each case based on its own merits.

Member Cieri disagreed with the idea the applicant's horses caused a detriment, as there were other horses in the area and it could not be said that their horses were the specific cause of the insect and dust problems. He also disagreed with the idea they would be granting a special privilege due to the fact the advertisement for the property had represented that horses were legally allowed, so they had bought it based on that information. Rectifying the situation by selling the property or letting the horses go placed a substantial burden on the applicant. He pointed out the parcel was very close to .5 acres.

Member Lawrence also expressed his sympathy but could not support the application.

Chair Wideman stated the situation was difficult and he expressed sympathy for the applicant. He opined the best argument for granting the variance would be based on compassion, rather than any legal reason. He pointed out a misleading advertisement does not override County code.

Chair Wideman went on to say he did not know if a half acre was too much or not enough for horses, but that is what was legally adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. He expressed concern that a variance granted for a .48-acre parcel may lead to a request for a variance on a .46-acre parcel, and wondered aloud where it would stop. He stated he was not able to make the findings; there was nothing special or unique about the property.

Member Horan moved to deny Variance Case No VA13-002 - Ellis. The motion was seconded by Member Toulouse and the denial passed by a vote of four in support and Member Cieri opposed to it.

The motion was based on the following findings:

1. **Special Circumstances.** Because of there are no special circumstances applicable to the property, including exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of the specific piece of property; exceptional topographic conditions; no extraordinary and exceptional situation or condition of the property and/or location of surroundings; the strict application of the regulation does not result in exceptional and undue hardships upon the owner of the property;

2. **No Detriment.** The relief will create a substantial detriment to the public good, substantially impair affected natural resources or impair the intent and purpose of the Development Code or applicable policies under which the variance is granted;
3. **No Special Privileges.** The granting of the variance will constitute a grant of special privileges inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and the identical regulatory zone in which the property is situated;

4. **Use Authorized.** The variance will authorize a use or activity which is not otherwise expressly authorized by the regulation governing the parcel of property; and

5. **Effect on a Military Installation.** The variance will not have a detrimental effect on the location, purpose and mission of the military installation. Mr. Whitney read the appeal procedure for items denied by the Board.

**Agenda Item 9D**

PUBLIC HEARING: Amendment of Conditions Case No: AC13-003 – City of Reno - To extend the approval of Special Use Permit Case Number SB11-002 for 3 additional years until June 2, 2016. The original approval allowed the construction of a new water storage tank of 250,000 gallons and related piping to enhance domestic water service and to provide fire protection at the Sky Tavern Ski Area.

- **Applicant:** Bowling Mamola Group, Attn: Douglas Buck
- **Property Owner:** City of Reno, Attn: Glen Daily
- **Location:** At the southwest corner of Sky Tavern Road and State Route 431
- **Assessor’s Parcel No:** 048-050-03
- **Parcel Size:** ±143.07
- **Regulatory Zone(s):** Parks and Recreation (PR)
- **Area Plan:** Forest Area
- **Citizen Advisory Board:** Galena / Steamboat
- **Development Code:** Authorized in Article:810, Special Use Permits
- **Commission District:** 1- Commissioner Berkbiger
- **Section/Township/Range:** Section 17, T17N, R19E, MDM, Washoe County, NV
- **Staff:** Roger D. Pelham, MPA, Senior Planner
- **Phone:** 775.328.3622
- **Email:** rpelham@washoeccounty.us

Chair Wideman opened the public hearing.

Mr. Pelham reviewed the staff report.

Chair Wideman closed the public hearing and asked if any Board members wished to provide disclosures. None did.

Member Toulouse moved to approve conditionally Amendment of Conditions Case No: AC13-003 – City of Reno. The motion was seconded by Member Horan and passed unanimously.

The motion was based on the following findings:

1. **Consistency.** That the proposed use is consistent with the action programs, policies, standards and maps of the Master Plan and the Forest Area Plan;
2. **Improvements.** That adequate utilities, roadway improvements, sanitation, water supply, drainage, and other necessary facilities have been provided, the proposed improvements are properly related to existing and proposed roadways, and an adequate public facilities determination has been made in accordance with Division Seven;

3. **Site Suitability.** That the site is physically suitable for a water tank, and for the intensity of such a development;

4. **Issuance Not Detrimental.** That issuance of the permit will not be significantly detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare; injurious to the property or improvements of adjacent properties; or detrimental to the character of the surrounding area;

5. **Effect on a Military Installation.** Issuance of the permit will not have a detrimental effect on the location, purpose or mission of the military installation.

**Agenda Item 9E**

PUBLIC HEARING: Amendment of Conditions Case Number AC13-004 - William Kunz Grading to amend approved Special Use Permit Case Number SB12-006 – To allow the addition of a permanent earthen structure (landscape mound) up to 9.5 feet in height, to the approved grading plans.

- **Applicant:** Gail Willey Landscaping
- **Property Owner:** William and Maureen Kunz
- **Location:** 6947 Windy Hill Road, approximately 1,200 feet north of its intersection with Lakeside Boulevard.
- **Assessor’s Parcel No.(s):** 041-101-16
- **Parcel Size:** ± 3.28 Acres
- **Area Plan:** Southwest Truckee Meadows
- **Citizen Advisory Board:** West Truckee Meadows CAB
- **Commission District:** 1 – Commissioner Berbigler
- **Development Code:** Article 438, Grading
  Article 810, Special Use Permits
- **Section/Township/Range:** Section 35, T19N, R19E, MDM, Washoe County, NV
- **Staff:** Roger D. Pelham, MPA, Senior Planner
- **Phone:** 775.328.3622
- **Email:** rpelham@washoe county.us

Chair Wideman opened the public hearing.

Mr. Pelham reviewed the staff report.

Member Horan asked Mr. Pelham to confirm the structure was already built and the Board was being asked to approve it retroactively. Mr. Pelham said that was correct.

Member Toulouse asked if there had been an approved landscape plan and Mr. Pelham said there had been. Member Toulouse expressed frustration with the number of projects the Board was asked to approve retroactively and wondered aloud if there was a mechanism to stop that situation from occurring. Mr. Pelham explained it was unfortunate but sometimes unavoidable, as the general public may not be familiar with the requirements of the Code.

Member Horan noted the structure had not been part of the original plan and asked how it had been discovered. Mr. Pelham explained the Building staff had advised the applicant they
would need utility permits. Building staff indicated the structure would require review by the Planning and Development division.

Chair Wideman closed the public hearing and asked if any Board members wished to provide disclosures. None did.

Member Cieri moved to approve conditionally Amendment of Conditions Case Number AC13-004 - William Kunz Grading. The motion was seconded by Member Horan and passed unanimously.

The motion was based on the following findings:

1. **Consistency.** That the proposed use is consistent with the action programs, policies, standards and maps of the Master Plan and the Southwest Truckee Meadows Area Plan;

2. **Improvements.** That adequate utilities, roadway improvements, sanitation, water supply, drainage, and other necessary facilities have been provided, the proposed improvements are properly related to existing and proposed roadways, and an adequate public facilities determination has been made in accordance with Division Seven;

3. **Site Suitability.** That the site is physically suitable for grading for future landscaping and for the intensity of such a development;

4. **Issuance Not Detrimental.** That issuance of the permit will not be significantly detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare; injurious to the property or improvements of adjacent properties; or detrimental to the character of the surrounding area; and

5. **Effect on a Military Installation.** Issuance of the permit will not have a detrimental effect on the location, purpose or mission of the military installation.

10. **Chair and Board Items**

   A. Discussion and possible action on revised Rules, Policies and Procedures for the Board of Adjustment regarding the conduct of meetings, hearings, and appeals to the Board, and governance matters such as quorum, voting, record keeping, and the duties, responsibilities and ethical rules for Board members.

   DDA Salter asked the Board if they would like to review the changes, adopt them, or take some alternate action. He explained it would be necessary for the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to approve changes to Washoe County Code Articles 912 and 914 before any changes approved by the BOA would take effect.

   Member Horan opined it was better to wait until after the BCC had approved the changes. Member Lawrence agreed, noting the new incoming member may have some input.

   DDA Salter told the Board there were five items that needed to be reworded. If the Board intended to defer review and approval to a later date, he would make the changes and submit them at that time.

   Chair Wideman verified the Board was in agreement the changes should be made and the report brought back for consideration and possible adoption.

   B. **Report on Previous Board of Adjustment Items.**

   None.
C. Future Agenda Items and Staff Reports

None.

11. Director’s Items

A. *Legal Information and Updates

Mr. Whitney told the Board staff was in the process of locating an individual to replace Member Cieri representing District 3. An agenda item was being prepared for the BCC to approve the reappointment of Member Lawrence and change his representation from District 3 to District 4.

12. Public Comment

As there was no response to the call for public comment, Chair Wideman closed the public comment period.

13. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board of Adjustment, Chair Wideman requested Member Cieri do the honors of officially closing his last meeting. It was officially adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Spinola, Recording Secretary

Approved by Board in session on August 1, 2013

William Whitney
Secretary to the Board of Adjustment