

I have wonderful news for you. It was recently reported that South Lake Tahoe casinos lead an earnings comeback in Nevada gaming with a net income increase of 92.5%. It looks like you don't have to use redevelopment to divert money from schools and firefighting to fund an event center after all. The casinos can now afford to do that on their own. Since they're the only business in Douglas County exempt from Nevada's Commerce Tax they will keep most of their profits.

Ending the redevelopment authority up at the Lake would allow the property tax from the \$700 million Beach Club that will be paying property taxes soon to flow back to the county. That could be as much as \$10 million per year.

Given that the new Federal tax law does away with deductions for entertainment costs, it's a good time to get the firefighters and the school kids' out of the event center business. I'm sure you know that you won't be getting Lady Gaga or Bruno Mars into a little 6000 seat venue anyway. Maybe you could get some tribute bands or third string comics, but the 7000 seat Reno event center mostly hosts sporting events.

The Lake redevelopment agency doesn't appear to meet any of the definitions of blight, and unless the law has changed it doesn't meet the requirement that it cover a contiguous area, so it's legally dodgy at best.

Overall this is great news for the people of Douglas County. If you're looking for funding sources for, let's say, infrastructure of some sort the honorable thing would be to let the wealthy casinos decide if they want to go all in on an event center without the taxpayers' help and redirect the tax dollars back to where they're needed most.

Lynn Muzzy

Opening Public Comment -  
Bob Ballou

Speak as an individual - not a spokesperson for any group or other person

Erred yesterday in comments about including affordable housing in MP

Apologize for misquoting NRS – like most laws, it's very cumbersome to read

Housing Element is not required for our county - but it's suggested for any county

Congratulate former boards and staff for including affordable housing in our MP

It's an example of how caring and compassionate some DC residents are of others

Reject the fallacious arguments that some are using against affordable housing...

That MFRs are havens for criminals or scumbags... and that

SFR neighborhoods are like Mister Rogers' and safe from criminals or scumbags

Some bad apples everywhere, not always visible to or reported on by neighbors

Hash cookers in MFR housing or parents enslaving 13 kids in a SFR neighborhood

The cost of housing is a real issue that needs to be addressed

Facts from NRHA support need for affordable housing in DC

Recall that most of us began living away from home in some form of MF housing...

A college dorm or an apartment with other singles

Today we need homes for young families and seniors

Hard to imagine how hard it is for young people who want to live and raise their family here where they grew up and went to school – heard example yesterday

My 2017 housing costs were 45% of our combined non-social security income...

...part time job, savings and pension benefits

It was 21% of all our combined income, including social security

And we don't even have a mortgage! With a mortgage we'd be in a world of hurt.

**Public Comment – BOCC – Jan. 23, 2018**

For the record: Jim Slade

As you know, I'm always willing to express my frank opinion on county matters that concern me. Yesterday I expressed my disappointment with the Board for wanting to change the rules for the 2016 Master Plan update long after the process should have already been completed. In doing so I was supportive of staff's efforts to get it accomplished. But that was yesterday.

Today I would like to comment on the Jan. 4, 2018 request for a zoning map amendment, a tentative subdivision map and a variance for Keith Serpa of Project LM for 178 homes in the Sunridge area. They requested a Planned Development Overlay, so that lots could be as small as 6000 sq. ft., rather than the required 8000 sq. ft., and offered to create 33 acres of common area and open space, apparently because that rocky, hilly part of the project area was unsuitable for building anyway. Yet they offered no amenities whatsoever for future residents: no park, no picnic area, no walking trails, nothing. They also requested a variance so that they would only have to have one ingress/egress, even though Improvement Standards clearly state that two ingress/egress are required for developments of 20 or more homes, principally for public safety.

The Board, to their credit, was not happy with the applicant's requests, mainly for the reasons stated above, and was clearly on the verge of voting for denial, when the applicant instead requested a continuance. The Assistant DA was consulted, and he stated that if the applicant was requesting a continuance that the Board "should" agree with the request, which the Board then did. I later suggested that the DA inappropriately said that the Board "should" agree with the request. At the next break, the DA privately told me that he should have said "may" rather than "should," but it was too late.

But my real concern is with staff, who recommended approval of all the applicant's requests. Why would staff support smaller lot sizes than the zoning required, when it was clear that the developer would not be building on the steep hillside anyway. The applicant just wanted to maximize the number of homes he was allowed to build so as to maximize his profits, but why would staff support that?

And why would staff support so-called common area and open space that was nothing more than an unimproved rocky hillside with no amenities, with no benefits for future residents? And why would they support a variance for only one ingress/egress rather than the required two? That is a matter of public safety. Staff's recommendations are troubling, and not in the public interest. The Board should have denied the project, as they seemed inclined to do, but they were misinformed by the DA, which was also unfortunate. County residents deserve better.

# County hosts local roads workshop

**O**n Jan. 22, county commissioners will hold a workshop on how to fund the maintenance of unincorporated local roads. As a member of the County's Road Maintenance Funding Task Force I have some thoughts about what Commissioners should consider.

1. The county maintained road system consists of regional roads and unincorporated local roads.

2. The county has adopted a policy of using regional revenue (that paid by all county residents) for regional roads and local revenue (that paid by residents in just a portion of the county) for local roads.

3. That policy is exemplified by the use of the recently added 5-cent gas tax, a regional tax, for the ongoing repair of regional roads. And by the use of local taxes paid by residents of our towns and GIDs to maintain their local roads.

4. With the increased gas tax our regional roads are being brought up to good repair. And local roads in our towns and GIDs are generally already in good repair. That leaves unincorporated local roads, those outside our towns and GIDs, as our chief

**Terry Burnes**  
*Guest Column*

maintenance headache.

5. The problem with unincorporated local roads is that there is no dedicated source of funds for their maintenance, as there is for other roads. Roads are, or will soon be, in good repair where residents pay for such repairs (regional roads, and local roads in the towns and GIDs). Roads are in poor repair where residents do not pay for road maintenance (unincorporated local roads).

6. If the county uses regional revenue to maintain unincorporated local roads, that amounts to a subsidy of unincorporated residents by those in the towns and GIDs, whereby those who already pay for local road maintenance pay more for those who don't.

Roughly two-thirds of county residents reside in our towns and GIDs, one-third in the unincorporated area. So approximately two-thirds of our regional, countywide taxes are paid by residents of the towns and GIDs, one-third by those in the unincorporated area. When those funds are used for unincorporated local road maintenance, two-thirds of

the cost is borne by those in the towns and GIDs.

7. It is wrong to say that the county does not maintain unincorporated local roads. There are two types of maintenance, routine maintenance and preventive maintenance. Routine maintenance includes such things as striping, signage and patching designed to keep roads safe and passable thus protecting the county from liability claims. Preventive maintenance includes such things as crack sealing, pavement overlays and road reconstruction designed to extend the life of the road. The County does perform routine maintenance on unincorporated local roads, but it does not have the resources to perform preventive maintenance on those roads.

8. The Task Force on which I served recommended what amounts to an unincorporated local roads tax to bring unincorporated taxation up to parity with the rest of the county and dedicate the resulting revenue to preventive maintenance on unincorporated local roads.

Opponents of an unincorporated local roads tax say it is divisive, pitting one area against another, that those in the towns and

GIDs should be happy to help their neighbors. What is actually divisive is asking the two-thirds of residents who already pay to maintain their local roads to pay more for those who don't.

9. I would not be opposed to providing temporary assistance from regional revenues to reduce the backlog of unincorporated local road maintenance, but that should be contingent upon unincorporated residents first being brought up to tax parity with those in the towns and GIDs, with the proceeds dedicated to unincorporated local road maintenance. God helps those who help themselves.

10. Some say we should find the funds for unincorporated local road maintenance by cutting budgets for other functions, which are mostly regional in nature. That would be contrary to the County policy in 2 above. We'd be cutting programs funded by regional taxes, with broad regional benefits, to fund local road maintenance in just a portion of the county. And we'd again have a subsidy, with those who already pay paying more for those who don't.

11. Worse yet would be the

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## OPINION

### BURNES

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misguided notion of taking funds from the towns and GIDs to fund maintenance of unincorporated local roads, spreading the problem of inadequate funding from the unincorporated area into our towns and GIDs. And again causing those who already pay to subsidize those who don't.

It seems obvious that the first step toward solving our unincorporated local road maintenance problem is for unincorporated residents to step up to the plate and help pay for what they want by being brought up to tax parity with the rest of the county.

Unincorporated residents must decide which is more important to them, tax avoidance or better roads. If they prefer tax avoidance, fine, their roads will continue to decline. But their refusal to pay is no reason to ask those who already pay, to pay more.

I hope unincorporated residents will go to the Jan. 22 workshop and tell Commissioners that you want better

local roads and are willing to pay for them, just as those in our towns and GIDs already do. And I hope the latter will go and tell Commissioners that you already pay for local road maintenance and aren't interested in paying more for those who don't.

I believe that combination would turn this discussion on its head, taking it from endless complaining about what isn't being done, to planning what can and should be done.

We had a similar history of complaining about regional roads, a discussion that went nowhere due to a lack of resources. But then our previous Board took the bull by the horns and passed the five cent gas tax. And now we have an improved Jacks Valley Road and more improved regional roads to come.

There's no free lunch. Want your unincorporated local roads fixed? Pay for them. Or be content just to keep complaining, with no results.

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*Terry Burnes is a retired Bay Area planner and Gardnerville resident.*

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