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PRESENTING THE FACTS ON INCLINE'S "HOLE IN THE GROUND"

By Ed Gurowitz, Chief Operating Officer

Since I went to work at TRPA in July, many people have seen me as Incline's "go-to guy" at the Agency. That's fine with me, and I'm glad to help. One thing that has come to me pretty frequently is complaints about the construction project at 1145 Lakeshore, or as some prefer to put it, "the hole in the ground," so I took it upon myself to look into the facts of the situation, which are as follows:

The parcel in question is about 3 acres, with proposed impervious coverage of 34,173 square feet. The legally allowable coverage for this parcel is 34,499 square feet, so the builder is not using all the square feet allowed, and no coverage had to be transferred into the site. The builder paid an excess coverage mitigation fee of \$11,120 for an additional 500 square feet of coverage in the "backshore," on environmentally sensitive ground. Paying this type of mitigation fee is not uncommon and the funds go to the Nevada Department of State Lands' Land Bank, where they're used to purchase, restore, and retire sensitive land from development.

When construction is complete, the parcel will be screened from the Lake and from the roads by plantings of mature (i.e. large) trees. Planting is scheduled to begin this month, with the property owner contractually obligated to monitor the health of these trees and to replace them should they fail to thrive.

The project meets all codes – height, shoreline scenic score, excavation depth, etc., 100% - no exceptions were made and no violations found on numerous inspections by TRPA staff. While the parcel had three legally existing Residential Units, only two are being used for this project, which brings the density on the parcel into conformity with the TRPA Code of Ordinances. Should the third unit be sold or otherwise transferred, the parcel will be reduced to two units in perpetuity.

Much has been made of the size of the hole that was dug. Because of the depth of the foundation (27 feet), the hole was oversized by 12 feet on all sides; when the foundation was poured, the extra 12 feet was backfilled. In any case, the hole is no longer a hole – it is now covered by the construction. There is currently an open, sunken area in the middle of the construction – this will be an underground garage which will be roofed and landscaped over the roof. According to the TRPA inspector, the entire construction area drains into the "hole", so there is no threat of sediment discharge during construction. In addition, many of the required permanent stormwater BMPs have already been installed.

Finally, to respond to some allegations I have heard, TRPA made no, repeat no, exceptions or special arrangements for this project and the only fees collected were the normal permitting fees.

Here's the bottom line: construction is an ugly, messy business, involving holes, bare frames, heavy equipment, etc., but having lived here for almost 17 years, I can remember countless projects, including my own house, that were eyesores while in progress and then looked anywhere from unremarkable to great when they were completed. I've seen renderings of how this project will look when it's done, and it will, believe it or not, be barely noticeable. A property of this size may not be to your taste – it's not to mine – but the owner has a right to build it and has done everything that was required to meet the law and environmental standards.