

Big Plans for Jamestown

B.J. Hansen, mymotherlode.com (Sonora), 8-17-10

JAMESTOWN, CA -- The proposed Gold Rush Gardens has cleared its first hurdle. The Tuolumne County Supervisors voted 5-0 to allow CAO Craig Pedro to negotiate a contract with the developers regarding use of the Jamestown Mine Site.

The developers say they currently have a forward commitment for construction financing up to \$250 million, with an estimated development cost of around \$225 million. The management team consists of Vincent Estell, Gary Wilson, Bruce Blankenhorn, Ron Kopf and Dennis Hummel.

There is a total of 670 acres at the mine site. The project calls for 65 acres of themed gardens, similar to Butchart Gardens in Victoria, British Columbia. The garden area may also include grapes and olives as a landscape component, to allow for some production of wine and olive oil.

An onsite sports complex would include 24 youth baseball/softball fields, six full size baseball fields, and a sports village for housing and dining during tournaments.

A recreational vehicle park would have 260 spaces for visitors. There are also sites for hotels and motels that could offer over 1,200 rooms.

For entertainment, the developers propose an IMAX style movie theater, water park, 36 lane bowling facility, miniature golf course, outdoor amphitheatre, and a logging, mining and antique car museum.

320,000 square feet would be set aside for retail commercial space, that could include a full service market, restaurants and specialty shops.

There are plans for a 3.2 acre assisted living facility that would provide 80 units of assisted living and a 40 bed Alzheimer Unit.

The group has an aggressive timeline that calls for completion in 2014, assuming they can quickly move through the environmental process. The developers say there's the potential to create around 1,500 full time jobs and 190 part-time jobs.

The Supervisors decision was to allow CAO Pedro to begin negotiations. The developers still need final approval from the Supervisors before the project can move forward.