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*El Paso County Planning Commission, Dec. 4 and 18*

Water master plan approved

By Helen Walklett

The El Paso County Planning Commission voted unanimously to adopt the county's new water master plan following a second public hearing at its meeting on Dec. 18. This followed a seven-hour public hearing at its Dec. 4 meeting, described by Chair Jim Egbert as an information-gathering meeting at which no action was taken.

The plan is intended to guide growth and land use decisions in the future and through that process encourage best management practices for water demand management, efficiency, and conservation. Its ultimate objective is to help ensure that all existing residents have a reliable water supply and that the water supply to all new development is considered at an earlier stage in the development process. It will become an element of the new county master plan,

which is currently under development.

The public hearings at the Planning Commission followed the presentation of the draft master plan to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in November (see www.ocn.me/v18n12.htm#epbocc).

The hearings

Introducing the plan at the Dec. 4 meeting, Craig Dossey, executive director of the El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department, explained that the water plan is the first step in a two-step process, the second being the development and adoption of the overall land use master plan.

Dossey told the commissioners that the issue of water and growth in the county continually comes up in discussions with county commissioners and county administrators. He said that one of the questions often raised about growth is "where's the water going to come from?" and commented, "We can't expect resources to last forever if we don't change what we are doing." He continued, "Without understanding where we are with water supplies and understanding where we are and where we should go with regard to water supplies, I don't think we can intelligently plan for land uses in the future."

Dossey urged the commissioners to keep in mind

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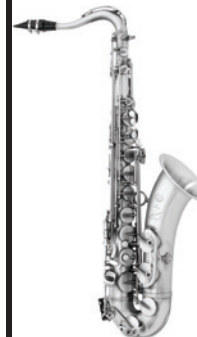
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