

COUNTY PC (Cont. from 18)

The commissioners voted unanimously to recommend the application for approval. It was then heard at the BOCC meeting on Nov. 24. See the BOCC article on page 17.

Sanctuary of Peace residential community

At the Nov. 19 Planning Commission hearing, the commissioners heard requests by Benet Hill Monastery for the rezoning from RR-5 (residential rural) and A-5 (agricultural) to PUD (planned unit development) to allow the development of 26 attached residential lots and a lot to be used as a business event center for the monastery on land adjacent to it. The private event center would be for the exclusive use of residents, their guests, and the sisters of the monastery.

The proposed development, to be known as Sanctuary of Peace Residential Community, would be built on a 49.5-acre parcel of land north of Stagecoach Road, south of Benet Lane, east of Roller Coaster Road, and west of Highway 83. The applicant also requested that the PUD be approved as a preliminary plan with a finding of water sufficiency for water quality, quantity, and dependability, which would allow the applicant to request the administrative approval of future final plats.

The county notified 27 adjacent property own-

ers and received no responses in favor or against. A neighboring property owner did speak by telephone at the hearing to voice concerns about traffic. The commissioners heard that the applicant had previously held two neighborhood meetings and had modified the plans in response to concerns to add emergency access and a community water system to reduce the number of wells.

Dave Gorman of M.V.E. Inc., on behalf of the applicant, described the proposed development as a clustered residential community in Black Forest with a focus on high efficiency and minimal use of resources. It would encourage the reduced use of motor vehicles and preserve most of the property, along with its natural features. The development would have a community water system and four shared on-site wastewater systems.

The clustering of the development will concentrate it into a 5-acre portion of the site, retaining about 44 acres as open space. The latter would be maintained by the Sanctuary of Peace Homeowners' Association (HOA) but would remain in the ownership of the monastery that would also be a part of the HOA.

Discussion focused on commissioners' concerns over the ownership of the open space and, in particular, what might happen to several private owners down the line if the monastery were to sell the open space or even close it. Vincent Crowder, property and building manager at the monastery, said that the aim

was to preserve the majority of the land as it was in perpetuity for the exclusive use and benefit of the residents and that this was covered in the covenants. He said, however, that this would not be a make or break issue if changes needed to be made. He said, "We would be very open to doing whatever is required to facilitate this request."

Commissioner Becky Fuller said she was uneasy with the monastery owning the open space. She felt ownership needed to lie with the HOA to provide adequate protection for future property owners. Other commissioners shared these concerns.

Trowbridge reminded his fellow commissioners that they have no purview over covenants. Kari Parsons, planner III, Planning and Community Development Department, commented that the HOA covenants had not yet been reviewed by county because this happens at the final plat stage.

Commissioner Tom Bailey said that he agreed with the staff recommendation that the applications met the requirement for approval and that he believed there were enough safety checks in place. The applications were approved 7-1. Fuller voted against, stating that she could not get past the HOA not owning the open space.

The applications are now due to be heard at the BOCC meeting on Dec. 8.

Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.

Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations, Nov. 14

NEPCO welcomes county commissioners

By Marlene Brown

The Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) held its general membership meeting Nov. 14 virtually by Zoom because of COVID-19 concerns. Many of the members are practicing the Safer At Home protocols and are still able to be involved in their community.

NEPCO continues to promote a community environment for the preservation of the high quality of life to be expected by the families and homeowners associations (HOAs) in the Tri-Lakes and Black Forest areas. NEPCO serves as a point-of-contact with many levels of county and state government regarding land use matters and living in Northern El Paso County.

Greg Lynd, president of NEPCO, opened the meeting by introducing the other board members and discussing the agenda, which included the annual presentation by El Paso Board of County Commissioners District 1, Holly Williams, and District 3, Stan VanderWerf. The general membership voted by email in September to give the commissioners Honoree Associate Member status for their ongoing contributions to the NEPCO area. An announcement that three open board member positions were being filled

by email election, there were not enough members in attendance to make a quorum and they would hold the election virtually. Emails were to be sent out separately to the general membership, and the election results would be announced at the next meeting. There are 59 members, which includes 47 HOAs in the area and 12 Associate members.

Commissioners' reports

Williams and VanderWerf explained that in the county budget, expenditures include: aging county buildings such as the El Paso County Jail needs upkeep that includes a lobby update, new locks, and cameras. The Citizens Service Center needs updates, but with a majority of the county workforce working from home, they were still able to provide services and productivity commitments.

Other financial challenges are road and infrastructure repairs and the I-25 Gap project, with another \$7.5 million needed to finish the project through the El Paso County corridor. The Department of Public Works has converted all daily briefings to in-vehicle laptop meetings rather than in-person. The budget, with over 2,300 miles of roads to repair and maintain at a certain standard, is funded by property

tax and sales tax.

The county represents 12.5% of the total population of Colorado. Building permits have exceeded 3,500 for each of the past five years and permits for new single-family homes have exceeded 3,600 this year and are expected to reach 5,000. With increased revenue, the county plans to make infrastructure investments and building developments and increase its economic power.

El Paso County Master Plan in final stages

We are now in the final steps of the El Paso County Master Plan, which includes implementation strategies, document development, and a goal of adoption by the county Planning Commission by the first quarter of 2021. For more information on the Master Plan, see <https://elpaso-hlplanning.hub.arcgis.com>.

To contact either commissioner, email them at HollyWilliams@elpasoco.com or StanVanderWerf@elpasoco.com.

The next meeting will be for NEPCO General Membership on Jan. 9 at 10 a.m. See <https://nepco.org>.

Marlene Brown can be reached at marlenebrown@ocn.me.

Woodmoor Improvement Association, Dec. 18

Board approves budget, plans common areas improvements

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board met on Dec. 18 to approve the budget and make plans for open space improvements. Board member Bert Jean was absent.

Budget approved

The 2021 budget was unanimously approved by the board. The budget includes an increase of less than 3% to the annual dues to \$267 per year. The new budget will be available along with past budgets on the WIA website at <http://bit.ly/wia-budget>.

Common areas improvements

The budget includes funding for plans to complete The Marsh trail loop, install a trail at The Meadows, place benches at both locations, and install a pavilion at Toboggan Hill in 2021. He said work may begin in April or May depending on the weather. More information about Woodmoor common areas can be found at <http://bit.ly/wia-common-areas>.

Board highlights

- Board Treasurer Connie Brown reported that WIA is running about 3.1% under budget on expenses for the year.
- Director of Covenants Ed Miller reported two hearings in October with one resulting in a \$5,000 fine for an open fire.
- Woodmoor Public Safety Chief Kevin Nielsen was presented with a certificate of appreciation

and a medal on Nov. 16 at the D38 Board of Education meeting.

- To date, 700 projects have been submitted to the Architectural Control Committee with a 98.2% approval rate.
- Roofing work on the Barn was scheduled for the week of Nov. 23 and park benches for installation at The Marsh were delivered.
- The board unanimously approved sending account 267WS to the attorney for legal action.

The WIA Board of Directors usually meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the Barn at 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Dec. 16 due to the holidays and may be held online.

The WIA calendar can be found at www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/ once approved and posted.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

November Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

It was another generally dry month around the region, although this is relative because November is usually one of our driest months of the year anyway. But, given that we have seen well-below normal precipitation since July, we need a few wet months in a row. Temperatures were again warmer than normal.

The first week of the month started with record warmth as temperatures were well above normal. This was most notable during the overnight hours, as low temperatures stayed above freezing for a record six days from the 2nd through the 8th. Not surprisingly, skies were generally clear the entire time with

no precipitation through the 7th. This warmth set records all around the region for the warmest start to November.

Fortunately, more "normal" conditions moved in over the next week with temperatures finally dropping to below freezing on the 9th. This cooler air was accompanied by some snowfall starting during the late morning hours and continuing off and on through evening. The amounts weren't all that impressive, with 1-3 inches for most of us, but this was a nice change from the record warmth and dry conditions. Clear skies behind this departing system, along with the fresh snow, allowed temperatures to dip into