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Children's Hospital Colorado

El Paso County Planning Commission, Nov. 3 and 17

Commissioners deadlocked in

Flying Horse North sketch plan vote

By Helen Walklett

At the Nov. 3 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, the commissioners heard the Flying Horse North sketch plan application. A rezoning request for a Monument Hill Road property, due to be heard at the Nov. 17 meeting, was withdrawn indefinitely at the meeting.

**Flying Horse North sketch plan**

A couple of weeks before the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved the sketch plan for Flying Horse North (see BOCC article on page 1), the application was heard by The Planning Commission at a hearing attended by around 100 members of the public. The commissioners were left tied 4-4 after the vote. This meant the application went to BOCC without any formal recommendation from the commission.

Phil Stuepfert, HR Green Development LLC, on behalf of owner PRI #2 LLC, c/o Elite Properties of America and Flying Horse Country Club LLC, said each project does not have to be in conformance or fully consistent with each applicable component of the master plan, stating, "We are in compliance with the majority of the master plan." He also stated that the plan was compatible with the surrounding area with the proposed larger lots on the outside providing a buffer between surrounding communities and the smaller, internal lots.

During the public comment part of the hearing, objections were raised on the grounds of compatibility with the surrounding area and conformance with the master plan. Concerns were also raised about traffic and water availability. Some residents donated their allotted three minutes to allow other speakers to give longer, more detailed presentations.

Rick Stauch, a 15-year Cathedral Pines resident and vice president of the Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District Board of Directors, representing the metropolitan district, Cathedral Pines Homeowners Association, and residents from the surrounding area, stated the master plan identifies Black Forest as large-lot residential "placetype" and that the propos-

als violate this placetype's densities. He said the area was surrounded by established large acre lots and commented, "What this proposal does is it creates an island of 380 acres of suburban residential placetype completely surrounded by large-lot residential."

Stauch said the hotel, golf club, and restaurant violated the master plan's guidance for commercial uses in large-lot residential placetype areas by neither providing a service meeting the general needs of the community nor being located on a major roadway. He said although the master plan is general in nature, it provides very specific guidance for Black Forest which the proposal ignores.

Terry Stokka, chairman of the Black Forest Land Use Committee and president of the Friends of Black Forest, described the proposals as wrought with violations and implored the commissioners to deny the application. He said, "We believe that this seriously erodes the validity of the county master plan. If it's going to be written, why not follow it?" He warned, "The plan would establish a town of up to 4,000 people and a town like that's going to have street lights and lawns and everything that are characteristic of a town but certainly not characteristic of country."

When discussion came back to the dais, Commissioner Becky Fuller was first to state she would be voting no, saying, "I think that large lot residential does not meet the criteria of having a big hotel there. The currently approved PUD is compatible. 2.5-acre lots. It all makes sense." Commissioner Tim Trowbridge also voiced concerns, finding the proposals not to be in conformance with the master plan. He said, "It's a minimal change area in the plan and this is not minimal change."

Commissioner Thomas Bailey disagreed, saying, "I think the master plan absolutely anticipates something like this and certainly there's enough reason to support, especially at this level, a sketch plan that pursues this kind of development. He commented on the landowner's right to use or pursue the use of their land the best way they see fit.

Making a motion to approve, Commissioner Sara Jack said, "This is a sketch plan, it's a concept plan. There will be a lot of work ahead for the developer and the community, and my experience with this developer is they will continue to work with the community."

The vote was tied 4-4. Commissioner Jay Carlson, Commissioner Eric Moraes, Fuller, and Trowbridge were the no votes. Commissioner Bryce Schuettpeiz, Commissioner Brian Risley, Bailey, and Jack voted aye. Commissioners Joan Lucia-Treese and Brandy Merriam were absent. Commissioner Christopher Whitney recused himself ahead of the hearing be-

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