

El Paso County Planning Commission, Sept.7 and 21

Preliminary plan for 21-home subdivision recommended for approval

By Helen Walklett
At the Sept. 21 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to recommend for approval an application for a preliminary plan for 20 single-family lots to be known as the Hay Creek Valley subdivision. The one residence currently on the property will remain, making a total of 21 lots.
The 214.62-acre property is zoned RR-5 (residential rural) and located west of Interstate 25, directly north of the United States Air Force Academy (USAF), south of the Forest Lakes subdivision, and southwest of the Town of Monument. Lots are planned to range in size from 5.5 to 17 acres. The USAFA has reviewed the plan and stated that an avigation easement (giving the right

of overflights in the airspace above or in the vicinity of the property) needs to be recorded with the final plat.
The property is currently gated and will continue to be once it is developed. Access is off Hay Creek Road. Jason Alwine, Matrix Design Group Inc. and representing the owner, said the county is requiring the developer to straighten the junction of the property's private road and Hay Creek Road to provide better line of sight.
The application was pulled from the consent calendar for a full hearing at the request of neighbors. One told the commissioners she had come to obtain more information, having only learned about the plans when the sign was posted the week before, and therefore did not know whether she was in

opposition. She raised concerns about the impact on wildlife, traffic, wild-fire evacuation, water availability, and county's communication with neighbors in the area about the application. She suggested a postponement of any decision to allow for those in the area to receive more information.
Alwine said they had worked extensively with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on wildlife issues and any fencing would follow state guidelines. The county and the Fire Department had looked at the access and concluded there was no option for two-way in and out. There will be a fire suppression system meeting the Fire Department's requirements in the form of an underground 33,000-gallon tank. Water will

be addressed at the final plat stage.
Staff clarified that in 2022 when the application was submitted, only adjacent neighbors were notified. That changed this year to all property owners within 500 feet and this had been done in this application's case.
The application is now scheduled to be heard at the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting on Oct. 12.
The Planning Commission also met on Sept. 7. The applications considered at that meeting went to the BOCC for consideration during September and are covered in the BOCC article on page 1.
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MFD (Cont. from 1)

and about \$22 million in total revenue for 2024 (includes \$4.1 million for contractual services for the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD). The total projected revenue for Wescott in 2024 is expected to be about \$4.3 million.
• The TABOR fund requires 3% of the total revenue be retained by the district. The amount will increase with the property tax revenue increase.
• The district proposes lowering the mill levy to 18.4 after raising it last year to 18.83 to offset the loss of revenue from the temporary residential assessment rate drop. See www.ocn.me/v22n12.htm#mfd.
• If Referendum HH passes in November, staff will present a modified budget based on the new assessed property valuations.
Treasurer Tom Kelly asked what would happen if the ballot initiative 6A/6B for Gleneagle residents does not pass in November.

Kovacs said the budget would be adjusted and the property tax of 7 mills and 21.9 mills will remain for Gleneagle residents.
Apparatus and facilities costs
Kovacs gave examples of the rising costs of firefighting apparatus, and said:
• In 2004, the district purchased an engine for about \$230,000, in 2019 the district purchased an engine for \$727,000, in 2022 the district purchased two engines for \$841,000 each, and now a new engine costs about \$946,000.
• The cost of fire apparatus has accelerated over time, and building construction costs have recently increased to \$800-\$1,000 per square foot.

- The district is proposing to purchase a Type 6 Engine (brush truck), a replacement ambulance, and an F150 administrative truck, in 2024.
- The district hopes to begin the remodel of Station 4, purchase land for a future station, rebuild Station 3 at a location north of the YMCA off Jackson Creek Parkway (will include the district administrative offices), and invest in a regional public safety training center.

Impact fees

Kovacs said the impact fees collected from the district growth must be spent during the growth period, so to make sure they are distributed legally: \$500,000 will be used to purchase land for a future Station 6, \$500,000 will be contributed to the rebuild of Station 3, and \$500,000 will be used for the Training Center. The Impact Fee Fund will continue to increase in revenue until everything is built out, but the district cannot use the funding to purchase any capital expenditure outright, he said.

Budget priorities 2024

- Kovacs said the department priorities are:
- A competitive salary and benefits package including a wage increase of 3% as a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for all employees, the introduction of a 2% per pay period district matching optional 457 retirement savings plan, and an increase in the sick time benefit from 96 hours to 120 hours.
 - Training and educational opportunities for all employees, with the existing assistance program.
 - Hiring three entry-level firefighters and create a position for a fire inspector and an administrative training officer position.

- Investment in capital facilities. A recent survey indicated the firefighters rate the facilities as average and below.
- Investment in capital fleet and equipment.
- The continuation of funds set aside for future capital purchases.
- Agency accreditation in spring

- 2025.
- The 2022-26 Strategic Plan, a roadmap for the future of the fire district, includes community expectations and what the district is hoping to achieve. The plan was formulated from a combination of input from a community stakeholders meeting, input from the

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