

Study of Stormwater Enterprise Fund proposed

Morton presented a proposal for a study to determine appropriate rates for a Stormwater Enterprise Fund to the board. The proposal specifies that GMS Engineering Inc. would review the town's financial records relating to stormwater, as well as operating and maintenance costs for proper stormwater management, and would propose fees to support stormwater management that complies with state law. The study would cost \$18,500, Morton said, would be completed within 120 days, and would include recommendations for establishing, operating, and billing for a Stormwater Enterprise Fund.

Trustee Dennis Stern asked if there was money in the budget for the study. Collins said the board has prioritized infrastructure issues, and the funds needed for the study were available. She said the current discussion was a chance to ask questions, and a resolution to approve the study would be brought to the board at a future meeting.

Resident Roger Mosely argued against the need for a stormwater enterprise fund, claiming it was an indirect way to get money for roads. He said drainage issues affected only hillside neighborhoods, his neighborhood did not have drainage issues and he should not be required to pay for problems related to stormwater.

Resident Marty Brodzik commented that it was impossible to remediate stormwater drainage problems in The Glen, as the streets had no room for culverts.

Morton pointed out that discharge of stormwater is regulated by the state, and the town will be fined if it does not comply with stormwater discharge regulations. Havenar said the town would not be able to obtain loans or grants unless a Stormwater Enterprise Fund is in place. Trustee Nick Ehrhardt said the entire town, not just the hillside neighborhoods, was responsible for proper management of stormwater.

The board took no action following the discussion on the expectation that a resolution would be brought back to them at a future meeting.

Draft of 2024 budget presented

At the Oct. 12 meeting, Collins distributed a draft of the town's budget for 2024. The board voted to hold a public hearing on the budget at the Nov. 6 board meeting.

Public hearings and resolutions

At the Oct. 26 meeting, three public hearings were held.

A public hearing was held regarding Creighton Smith's application for a conditional use permit to open a motorcycle maintenance business at 84 Highway 105. At the hearing, Ball raised issues about fuel storage, fumes, and proximity to a restaurant and residences. Smith said very little fuel would be stored on site and fans would be used to mitigate fumes.

Terri Hayes, president of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, spoke in support of Smith's applica-

tion, arguing that the town needed tax revenue and should be willing to accept change.

Following the hearing, the board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 69-2023, which approves Smith's conditional use permit.

A second public hearing was held regarding James Wilson's request to move an interior lot line on his property at 84 Highway 105, known as Wilson's Corner. There were no questions from staff or the public at the hearing and the board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 70-2-23, authorizing the change to the lot line.

A third hearing was held regarding Maria Duran's request to vacate and replat a property at the intersection of Buena Vista and Rosita Avenues. Collins said the staff supported the request and the board voted to approve Resolution 71-2023, granting Duran's request.

Petition for annexation considered

Collins told the board that the United Congregational Church, at 3295 Palmer Divide Rd., has petitioned for annexation into the town. She said staff would bring back a resolution to approve the annexation at a future meeting.

Brodzik told the board that she opposed the church being annexed without relinquishing its water rights to the town. She asked that the church be required to commit to no future development on its property.

Krob said the details of the annexation would be worked out later in the process when there is a zoning request.

Special event permits granted

The board approved special event permits for three events:

- The Funky Little Theater production of The Stinky Cheese Man, Saturday, Nov. 11 at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall.
- The Second Annual Town Christmas Tree Lighting, Saturday, Dec. 2 at 5 p.m. at the Village Green next to the Town Hall. Santa Claus and his wife will attend, cocoa will be served, and there will be an ugly sweater contest.
- A Christmas Musical Review, Friday, Dec. 15 at 7 p.m. and Saturday Dec. 16 at 2 p.m. at the Town Hall. The event will be put on by the Arts Council.

Electric vehicle charger proposed

Collins told the board that CORE Electric Cooperative had proposed the installation of an electric vehicle charging station on town property, with the location to be determined. The consensus of the board was to continue the discussion with CORE, but to clarify if the town would receive revenue from the charger.

Accounting practices questioned

Brodzik asked the board to explain why entries regarding water loan reserves and American Recovery Plan Act funds were in different locations in the town's financial reports. Collins explained some items were moved to the cash position portion of

the financial reports as part of the town's cleanup of its financial reporting. Brodzik claimed the board is covering up serious errors in the past and pointed to voided checks as an example. Collins said that in the past there was no policy regarding voided and re-issued checks, but now the town has a register of voided checks. Collins offered to report on checks voided in 2022 if the board requested it.

Executive sessions

The Oct. 12 meeting was preceded by an executive session to discuss the potential sale of public property and to receive legal advice concerning a Police Department complaint.

The Oct. 26 meeting was preceded by an executive session to discuss the potential sale of public property and to receive legal advice concerning a Police Department complaint and a human resources complaint.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Nov. 9. The board will meet only once in November to accommodate the Thanksgiving holiday. See the town's website at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times and dates of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

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

The Beauty Studio
 Refresh Your Look with Gorgeous Highlights, Hair Extensions, Perms, Fashion Color & More!
 Rita Shepherd-Fear
 719-221-1750
 Booth rental available
 153 N. Washington St. #101 Monument 80132



Specializing in Residential Cleaning *A Gift of Time*
 Overwhelmed? Want your home spic and span?
Call Stacy today!
 (719) 930-2178
www.agiftoftime.us
 Weekly • Bi-weekly • Monthly • Move-outs • Move-ins.




NEED WELDING?
 All types of welding and cutting/fabrication. In shop or in the field.
 28 Years Experience • Insured
www.sharpestcut.com
Sharpest Cut 719-491-4811

Karate Builds Confidence Like Nothing Else Does!
 Classes for: 3-5 yrs • 6-11 yrs • Teens • Adults
 Confidence Course: \$49!
 • Two Private Lessons
 • Official Uniform
 • Break a Board or Brick!

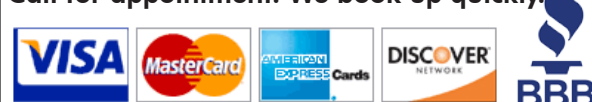



clickheretobook.online/itp or text 719-360-9559

FACINELLI MOTORS



TIME FOR A ROAD TRIP CHECK?
QUALITY AUTO REPAIR
 SUBARU • HONDA • TOYOTA
CALL TODAY 488-6729
 706 Westward Lane, Palmer Lake
 Mon.-Fri. 7:30 am-6:00 pm
 Call for appointment. We book up quickly.



El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Oct. 3, 12, 19, and 24

County presents its 2024 preliminary balanced budget, approves 21-home development

By Helen Walklett

During October, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) heard proposals for the 2024 county budget. The commissioners also approved a plan for a 21 single-family subdivision south of the Forest Lakes development.

2024 preliminary balanced budget

The county Financial Services Department presented the preliminary balanced budget at the Oct. 3 BOCC meeting. The approximate \$482.9 million budget includes \$217 million in unrestricted general fund expenditures and prioritizes investments in road infrastructure and public safety. Roads and Bridges is assigned a one-time \$10 million funding increase to address high-priority projects in addition to the base budget of \$28 million, and public safety is allocated \$97 million, 45% of the total unrestricted general fund. The budget includes a 2.5% cost-of-living pay increase for county employees.

As the county's revenues exceeded the TABOR cap this year, residents will see a refund of \$138 per property via their property tax bill in 2024.

Nikki Simmons, chief financial officer, said: "One of the highest priorities for this budget was to ensure we have a recession-resistant budget." Commenting on the 22% of revenue earmarked for reserves, Chair Cami Bremer said, "I am incredibly comfortable with that given the number of unknowns we have, and I think we continue to do a great job of conservative budgeting here."

As part of the budget-setting process, county departments and offices presented their critical needs to the commissioners at the Oct. 19 and 24 meetings. A further budget hearing is scheduled for Nov. 14 when the BOCC will give final direction on budget allocations.

The public is encouraged to participate in the budget-setting process. The preliminary budget and all supporting documents can be viewed on the county website at: <https://admin.elpasoco.com/financial-services/budget-finance/county-budget/>. Paper copies are also available for inspection in the commissioners' office at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs.

The final budget vote is scheduled to be held at the BOCC meeting on Dec. 5. However, if ballot initiative HH passes, the valuation of properties in the county could change, and budget adoption will not be

possible until the first week of January 2024.

Hay Creek 21-home subdivision

At the Oct. 12 BOCC land use meeting, the commissioners approved 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 application came to the BOCC from the Sept. 21 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting with a unanimous recommendation for approval.

The 214.62-acre property is zoned RR-5 (residential rural) and located west of Interstate 25, directly north of the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA), south of the Forest Lakes subdivision, and southwest of Monument. Lots are planned to range from 5.5 to 17 acres. The USAFA has reviewed the plan and stated that an aviation 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. Trees will be removed as part of the improvements.

Twenty-one neighbors were notified ahead of the public hearings. Justin Kilgore, planning manager, Planning and Community Development, said that concerns had been raised about the potential impacts on wildlife and traffic at the Planning Commission hearing. No one spoke against the application at the BOCC hearing. One neighbor spoke in support, stating, "As neighbors we would love to have as much open space as possible, but I do think development is inevitable and I think the developer has been very responsible in trying to keep the development" in keeping with the rest of the development in the valley.

Regarding wildlife, Alwine said Colorado Parks and Wildlife had recommended prairie dog and burrowing owl surveys that had shown no evidence of either creature. He said that raptor nesting on the property meant the developer would be limited when construction and wildfire mitigation could take place and they would work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to establish those timeframes. No high fencing was being proposed, and bear-proof containers