

and inside storage would be used to help eliminate some of the human/wildlife interaction. The extent of wildfire mitigation work would depend on where

on the lots houses are built and the developer would work with county staff and the Fire Department on this throughout the construction process.

The vote to approve was unanimous.  
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### El Paso County Planning Commission, Oct. 19

## Black Forest four-lot subdivision recommended for approval

By Helen Walklett

At the Oct. 19 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to recommend for approval rezone and minor subdivision applications to create a four-lot subdivision, Fairytale Acres, at a Herring Road property. The request is to rezone 7.59 acres of the 14.54-acre property from RR-5 (rural residential) to RR-2.5 (rural residential).

The subdivision request includes two waivers, one to allow a private roadway instead of a public road, and the other to exempt the property from having to provide a fire cistern. Discussion at the hearing centered on the latter with Ryan Howser, planner III, Planning and Community Development, explaining that although the code states a fire cistern is required where fire hydrants are not present, a 2013 Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) resolution states that subdivisions of four or fewer lots are exempt from International Fire Code (IFC) coverage, which is the model code on which the county's fire requirements are based.

Howser said, "I do think that the waiver is still warranted because our code requires it. However, I could interpret that as a conflict between the board's adopted version of the IFC and the code."

Howser stated that the Black Forest Fire Protection District (BFFPD) had chosen not to comment on the matter, its stance being that it will always recommend code compliance in lieu of making a formal recommendation one way or the other. Meggan Herington, executive director, Planning and Community Development, said that, unlike larger districts, BFFPD does not have a fire marshal looking specifically at fire code and the application of the IFC and so is choosing to stay neutral.

Nina Ruiz, Vertex Consulting Services, representing the applicant and speaking in justification of the cistern waiver, said the property was 2.5 miles from the fire station, which would allow for relaying fire trucks to fill up there should a fire occur. She also said the property was treeless and the homes would be spread apart, reducing the risk of fire jumping from

one structure to another. BFFPD's fire risk assessment has identified the property as having a low overall risk rating.

Commissioner Eric Moraes suggested, given the BOCC's resolution, that a waiver was not really needed. Herington replied, "I would disagree with that because this section of the code I believe was written in 2014 and so my question is, 'Why was this section of the land development code not amended to specify that minor subdivisions were not required to follow the land development code?'"

Herington stated, "When we update the code next year, we really need to pay attention to this section of the land development code and what needs to be in it and what doesn't need to be in it and where we would just reference International Fire Code."

The vote to recommend both applications for approval was unanimous. They are now scheduled to be heard at the BOCC land use meeting on Nov. 9.  
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### Woodmoor Improvement Association, Oct. 25

## Board president explains WIA approach

By Jackie Burhans

At its October meeting, the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board heard remarks from President Brian Bush comparing WIA to other homeowners associations (HOAs) and reviewed board director reports.

### Board president contrasts WIA with other HOAs

Bush noted that the news about homeowners associations is frequently negative, citing recent reports that Green Valley Ranch HOA foreclosed on homes without notifying owners. He noted that Colorado House Bill 22-1137, which requires improved notices and a public vote on referring debts to a collection agency, now controls the foreclosure process for HOAs.

However, he emphasized that WIA does not and never has operated that way. Bush said that WIA, which is one of the state's largest HOAs, has never foreclosed on a property in his eight years on the board. WIA does not like to impose hearings or fine owners, preferring to work with them to correct any deficiencies. WIA wants to maintain community standards and common areas for the benefit of all residents, Bush added. All board members are volunteers, and WIA includes outstanding staff and public safety officers who focus on customer service. In one example, it was noted that a resident wondered on social media whether a 12-foot skeleton would be allowed by the HOA and was contacted by WIA staff, who said it would be fine.

Bush said if there were no HOA, he felt the area's appearance would quickly degrade. He expressed concern about the legislative direction that might make it impossible to have or to serve on HOAs. A resident asked if WIA had any connections with the Legislature, and Bush said he had contact with our local state senator and state representative and had testified on behalf of WIA residents to the El Paso Board of County Commissioners.

Asked how WIA communicates with its residents, Bush noted there was an electronic newsletter, but

WIA only has contacts for about half of its residents. Residents can subscribe to the monthly newsletter, important notices, and WPS reports at the bottom of its web page at [www.woodmoor.org](http://www.woodmoor.org). Email addresses are never shared or sold, he said.

Finally, Bush noted that the WIA annual assessment is about \$283, contrasting it with other HOAs that charge as much as \$700 per month. WIA provides architectural and covenant control, access to many common areas, The Barn community center, and the services of Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS).

### Board reports

- Public Safety Director Brad Gleason noted that Lewis-Palmer D38 has received approval to proceed with its Safe Routes to School trail project. Once the school district finalizes its agreement with Woodmoor Water and Sanitation, the trail and the bridge will go out to bid, and the school district will take ownership and responsibility for the maintenance of the bridge over the spillway on Woodmoor Lake.
- Board Treasurer Connie Brown reported there were 66 unpaid accounts. Bush noted that the income and expenditures were on track, and the board might end up with some savings.
- Covenants Director Per Suhr reported 35 covenant-related items yielding two violations. Ten issues were resolved with friendly communications, and there were three unfounded complaints. WIA processed 10 HOA checks related to home sales. There were no covenant hearings in October, and none planned yet in November.
- Architectural Control Director Ed Miller noted that 67 projects had been approved in September, and one project had been disapproved. Year to date, the number of submitted projects is 465, which is a 4.2% decrease from the prior year. The project approval rate is 98.8%.
- Forestry Director Cindy Thrush reported there had been 15 Forestry/Firewise visits in September and that a \$26,000 reimbursement request

had been submitted, bringing WIA to the end of its original \$245,000 matching grant for fire mitigation. An additional grant of \$30,000 was received in May, and WIA is suspending new applications until it determines the amount remaining after six recent applications. Thrush said WIA is looking for new funding opportunities.

- Common Area Director Steve Cutler said that the sprinkler system at The Barn community center would be shut down at the end of the month, common area fire mitigation is continuing, and work on common area trails would be done as weather permits, pending contractor availability.
- Bush said that a new Woodmoor Public Safety WPS vehicle had been rear-ended and was out of commission until repairs were completed. He also noted that a bench in the Fairplay Drive median had been destroyed by a car and would be covered by insurance and replaced as soon as possible.
- Bush said that a draft budget for WIA had been presented at the executive session ahead of the board meeting and is available to consider until the Nov. 15 board meeting, at which time the board will be asked to approve it. The budget sets salaries, expenses, and income for the year and will drive next year's annual assessment rate. Once approved, the 2024 budget can be found at [www.woodmoor.org/budget-statements](http://www.woodmoor.org/budget-statements).

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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 has been moved to Nov. 15 due to the holiday.

The WIA calendar can be found at [www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/](http://www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/). WIA board meeting minutes can be found at [www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/](http://www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/) once approved and posted.  
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## September Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

October was again warmer than average with below-normal precipitation. Almost the entire month saw quiet and dry weather, with exceptions at the beginning and end. Overall for the year, we are still above normal from a precipitation perspective, so hopefully that will continue through the winter and spring. And given that we have an El Niño pattern set up in the Pacific, there is a higher-than-normal chance of above-normal snowfall, especially later into winter and through the spring. Let's hope this pattern plays out.

The other nice aspect of the quiet weather most of the month was that the sunny skies, warm days, and cool nights were perfect for the development of fall colors. This resulted in a nice progression of fall colors as we moved through the month and no storms or strong winds coming through to freeze the leaves or blow them away too quickly.

The month started off mild with highs in the mid-70s on the 1st and 2nd. This warmth also helped to produce some last remnants of summer-type weather, with thunderstorms developing during the late afternoon and early evening of the 2nd. These produced some quick rainfall accumulations of nearly a half inch in spots. However, for most of us, this was our last measurable precipitation for several weeks until the 28th. The only exception were some showers of both rain and snow at times from the afternoon of the 11th off and on through the morning of the 13th. This was an extended dry period even for a time of the year when quiet weather conditions are common.

The quiet pattern was finally broken starting on the 26th and continuing through the 29th. The first change was signified by a cold front that blew through during the late afternoon of the 26th bringing cooler air, low clouds, fog, and a few flurries. After this initial push, cool and quiet weather took hold on the 27th before a stronger push of cold air and moisture

moved in on the 28th. This second, stronger cold front was overrun by moisture and lifted aloft. This allowed the atmosphere to moisten up and, when combined with the upslope flow, produced widespread snow from the 28th through the afternoon of the 29th.

Temperatures were well below normal as well with highs dropping from the low 70s on the 26th to the low 40s on the 27th and low 30s on the 28th. Bands of snow began to develop during the afternoon of the 28th and continued off and on through the 29th. This system was different than our typical snow events because it was driven by strong winds and rising motion high in the atmosphere combined with cold air at the surface. This resulted in a wide range of snowfall totals over relatively short distances. Temperatures were coldest on the 29th through the morning of the 30th, as highs struggled to reach 20 degrees and morning lows dipped all the way to the single digits above and below on the 30th. Sunshine returned to end the month, but the clear skies and lingering snow meant a cold start to each day, and also kept afternoon temperatures below average through Halloween.

### A look ahead

November is generally dry and cool around the region.

We usually get several light snowfalls interspersed with sunny skies. Gusty winds commonly develop on a couple of days as the jet stream becomes more active and directly affects Colorado. High temperatures average in the upper 40s early in the month to low 40s by the end with overnight lows often dipping into the teens and single digits.

### October 2023 Weather Statistics

Average High	62.0° (+2.5°)
100-year return frequency value max	67.7° min 50.7°
Average Low	31.2° (+1.9°)
100-year return frequency value max	36.8° min 26.4°
Monthly Precipitation	0.41" (-1.12")
100-year return frequency value max	4.63" min 0.18"
Monthly Snowfall	3.6" (-7.4")
Highest Temperature	78° on the 20th
Lowest Temperature	-1° on the 30th
Season to Date Snow	3.6" (-7.4")
	(the snow season, Oct 1 to Sept 30)
Season to Date Precip.	24.26" (+2.74")
	(the precipitation season, Jan 1 to Dec 31)
Heating Degree Days	570
Cooling Degree Days	0

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## Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 23.

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community are the responsibility of the letter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer. The letters are arranged in alphabetical order based on the last name of the author.

### Tom Olmstead? No thanks

I am very concerned about Tom Olmstead's candidacy for the D38 school board. Olmstead's appearance at the KOAA forum revealed a lack of qualifications and understanding, and an obsessed focus on personal grievances. I will not be voting for him.

Olmstead's forum performance was marked by a stunning lack of preparedness. He seemed unfamiliar