

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, May 2, 9, and 16

Approval of three commercial multi-tenant buildings off Struthers Road

By Helen Walklett

At the May 16 El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) land use meeting, the commissioners voted to approve a preliminary plan for the Cathedral Rock Commons Commercial development, which will create three commercial lots on property directly south of the Big R store off Struthers Road in Monument.

Cathedral Rock Commons Commercial

At the May 16 meeting, the commissioners approved a preliminary plan request by Store Master Funding VIII LLC, the owners of the Big R Store, to create three commercial lots and a tract on the 10.25-acre property at the northeast corner of Struthers Road and Spanish Bit Drive. The land is zoned commercial community. The application came from the Planning Commission with a recommendation for approval following its April 20 meeting.

The existing Big R will be on the 6.2-acre lot 1. Lots 2 and 3 will each be

less than 2 acres and will have three commercial multi-tenant retail buildings on them, connected via a shared driveway to the Big R store to the north. The applicant anticipates the properties will include businesses that cater to the rural aesthetic that supports the existing Big R store. The first building to the east will potentially have three retail tenants as will the middle building which will also have a drive-through. The third building on the west side of the drive will house a possible wheat grass business and restaurant.

The application was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion.

Loop Water Authority update

At the May 9 BOCC meeting, the commissioners received an update on the Loop Water Authority water reuse project which will build infrastructure to allow water flowing south to be reused by being stored in Calhan Reservoir and pumped back north to customers after treatment. The project received

\$4 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding from county in September 2022. See Loop Water Authority article on page 22.

Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD), Donala Water and Sanitation District, the Town of Monument, and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District formed the El Paso County Regional Water Loop Authority (EPCRWLA) in November 2022.

Amy Lathen, CMD general manager, told the commissioners that the four organizations were working together to deliver renewable water sources to customers in the northern part of the county. She said the renewable and reuse water would take some of the pressure off the Denver Basin wells and preserve water resources in the parts of the county that are not part of Colorado Springs Utilities' water resource system. Lathen stressed that the authority was very open to other districts joining as they see the benefit of the project.

Jessie Shaffer, district manager,

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District and president of EPCRWLA, said water quality testing had begun and that the authority was working to hire a project manager to get the project to the construction phase. He hoped to have the person in place in June.

Kevin Brown, CMD water resource engineer, said a schematic design would be worked on over the next six months. This would identify the pipeline route, required pipe sizes, and where pump stations and other infrastructure should be located. This information would then allow the project to move forward with land acquisition.

Commissioner Stan VanderWerf stated he remained really supportive of the concept, commenting, "I really honestly feel we've been great and responsible stewards of our precious resources here in this region, including water, and this is just another great example of trying to continue that legacy."

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El Paso County Planning Commission, May 4 and 18

Townhome development off Woodmoor Drive recommended for approval

By Helen Walklett

At the May 18 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, the commissioners heard a rezone and preliminary plan request for a 7.53-acre property on the east side of Woodmoor Drive where 52 townhomes would be built. The commissioners also heard a rezone and a minor subdivision request for Black Forest properties during May.

Townhome development proposed off Woodmoor Drive

At the May 18 meeting, the commissioners voted 6-1 to recommend for approval a combined rezone and preliminary plan request by Lake Woodmoor

Holdings LLC for a 7.53-acre property on the east side of Woodmoor Drive and south of Deer Creek Road. Known as Waterside at Lake Woodmoor, it borders the lake to its east and proposes 52 single-family townhomes.

The rezone would see the property zoned PUD (planned unit development) instead of its current and now obsolete R-4 (planned development) zoning. The applicant also requests a finding of water sufficiency for water quality, quantity, and dependability and has secured a commitment letter from Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, and both the county attorney

and the state water engineer have made findings of sufficiency. Ryan Howser, planner III, Planning and Community Development Department, explained that if the water were approved at this stage, final plats could be approved administratively, meaning no further public hearings for this application.

Brooks Swenson, project manager, NES Inc. and representing the applicant, said the proposed development has a density of about 6.9 dwelling units per acre (DUA). This is less than the approximate density of 11 DUAs for the 83 Waterside Condominiums that were approved on the site in 1983 but never developed.

The applicant states in their letter of intent that the development will facilitate a density transition between the higher density residential and commercial to the south and the lower density residential to the north and east. In total, 35% of the development would be open space.

The applicant is asking for four modifications with the PUD, and Commissioner Eric Moraes raised an issue with the one requesting a cul-de-sac be replaced by a hammerhead turnaround. He said he could not see how it could be justified by the land development code criteria.

Howser said the county had notified 35 adjoining property owners. No one spoke in support at the hearing; two local residents spoke in opposition, raising concerns about water, traffic (particularly in relation to the nearby schools and pedestrian safety), and that the hammerhead was not in keeping with the surrounding area where cul-de-sacs prevail.

Swenson responded that the traffic study had taken the school traffic into account and stated, "what's being proposed is less dense than what's been approved [in the past] and so there would be a reduction in traffic." He stated that the applicant has been working with the Woodmoor Improvement Association to advance the Safe Routes to School plan and commented that the lower density would help with water use and that there was also a

housing crisis which the development would help address.

Commissioner Becky Fuller said, "I think generally speaking this fits. It makes a lot of sense."

Moraes said, "I generally think it's a good project, but I don't think they've made the justification in accordance with the land development code on the hammerhead." He added that he had other reservations such as the request to have private roads which people might use to bypass Woodmoor Drive. He thought this would eventually lead to the private roads being closed to non-residents.

The vote to recommend for approval was 6-1. Moraes was the nay vote. Commissioner Christopher Whitney said his vote was "a reluctant yay for the same reasons as Mr. Moraes."

The application is now due to be heard at the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) land use meeting on June 20.

Vessey Road rezone to RR-2.5

Also at the May 18 meeting, the commissioners heard a request to rezone a 14-acre Black Forest property from RR-5 (rural residential) to RR-2.5 (rural residential). It is west of the intersection of Vessey Road and Black Forest Road and south of the intersection of Vessey Road and Pine Castle Drive.

The applicant has also submitted a minor subdivision application and wishes to divide the property into a three-lot subdivision with each lot being 4 acres or greater. This application is currently under review.

The rezone application was originally scheduled as a consent item but was elevated to a full hearing, albeit a short one, after concerns were raised that the rezone would allow the applicant or a subsequent owner to ask for five lots in the future. Commissioner Becky Fuller asked, "Is there protection for the neighbors if we approve this?" Commissioner Jay Carlson questioned whether they [the commissioners] could add a condition that the applicant abide by the lot sizes set out in the subdivision application. Senior



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