

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, June 27, July 11 and 18

## Board receives Monument annexation impact report

By Marlene Brown and  
Helen Walklett

At the July 11 El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting, the commissioners received an annexation impact report from the Town of Monument concerning land south of County Line Road.

### Monument Ridge East and West annexation

An annexation impact report from the Town of Monument was received by the commissioners at their July 11 meeting. The BOCC cannot approve or deny an annexation report; it serves to notify it of the annexation request and sets out potential impacts in general terms. The Monument Ridge East and West annexation concerns 160 acres of land south of and abutting County Line

Road between Beacon Lite Road on the west and Misty Acres Boulevard on the east.

Accepting the report, the commissioners directed staff to comment that the BOCC expects the Town of Monument to annex Beacon Lite Road once the planned improvements to it are completed.

The annexation was scheduled to be heard by the Monument Town Council in July. See the Monument Town Council article on page 1.

### Support for Monument pumpkin patch business

Local resident Bill Denim spoke in the public comment period of the June 27 meeting in support of the Colorado Pumpkin Patch, a Monument business. He said it was his understanding that the business is being threatened by a com-

plaint about the traffic it generates. It's located on a working farm off Highway 105 and operates for about six weeks every year.

Denim said the business has tremendous value and it brings in a lot of money for the county, provides families with a fun fall activity, and operates a nonprofit allowing families with special needs children to enjoy the pumpkin patch for free. He urged the commissioners to support it.

### New property assessments

At the July 18 meeting, Mark Flutcher, county assessor, spoke about new property assessments. There have been 33,724 appeals in El Paso County, which is about 12 percent of total real property assessments that went out to the

property owners. About 16,467 assessments were adjusted, for a total of about \$1.9 billion reduced. About 6.7 percent of the total bills were reduced, which Flutcher stated "is in line with past years' average."

Flutcher said his office has been working with the state and is in line with the statutes that were put in place this year, and it does not have the authority to cap reassessments. Flutcher had gone to the state capitol to support a bill to cap assessment increases at 10 percent, but that bill was shot down in committee. Preliminary audit results could not be shared until the State Equalization Board approved the audit.

All the commissioners except Vice Chair Carrie Geitner attended National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual

Conference & Expo in Austin, Texas on July 21-24. The conference is the largest meeting of county elected and appointed officials in the country. NACo helps to shape federal policy and share proven practices and learn about the latest trends in county government roles.

The meeting was adjourned after 25 minutes.

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The next BOCC meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. Aug. 8. View agendas and meetings at [www.agendasuite.org/iip/el Paso](http://www.agendasuite.org/iip/el Paso). Meetings are held at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave, Suite 150, Colorado Springs.

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Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Organizations, July 22

## NEPCO hears about renewable water projects

By Jackie Burhans

The Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Organizations (NEPCO) held its general membership bi-monthly meeting on July 22 at the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) Barn community center. NEPCO has 49 member associations representing over 10,000 homes and 20,000 registered voters within its focus area, which extends from the foothills to the west to just past Highway 83 on the east and from County Line Road on the north of El Paso County to Shoup Road on the south. NEPCO also has two individual members, two business members, and six honorary associate members, including Our Community News.

NEPCO's purpose is to protect property rights; encourage beautification, planned development, and maintenance by government agencies; provide a forum for the free exchange of ideas; and serve as an area-wide point of contact regarding land use matters.

NEPCO conducted board business and heard committee reports, reported on the Monument Ridge annexation, and heard presentations on "Water Issues and Future Renewable Water in the NEPCO Region," followed by a panel discussion.

### Board business and committee reports

President Mike Aspenson announced that Bob Mooney, chair of the Transportation and Land Use Committee, would be retiring soon. He asked that anyone interested

in the leadership position to contact any board member by their position (e.g., president@nepco.org) or contact Mooney at bobmooney01@msn.com or at 719-930-9735. No experience is necessary as NEPCO will provide guidance and training, he said.

Vice President Bob Swendenburg noted that homeowners associations (HOAs) are struggling with the increase in HOA insurance costs for their boards. He found an insurance company with good rates that is reaching out to HOAs and recommended contacting Dwayne Thomas of American Family Insurance.

### Monument Ridge annexation update

Harold Larson, member at large, reported that in 2017, the Town of Monument made a comprehensive plan that looked at contiguous areas it might annex if they met some minimum prerequisites. Larson said he reached out to the developer of the Monument Ridge parcels that are south of County Line Road on either side of I-25. He noted that this area is a beautiful point of entry to El Paso County, and Monument Ridge East is near his backyard.

The developer's plan showed a high-density, "worst case" scenario, he said, with a lack of definition regarding trees, trails, wildlife, and impact on nearby property values. There was a lot of community input during the Monument Planning Commission meeting, and the commission voted to recommend the annexation but stipulated that it would be zoned for 2.5-acre

lots.

The Monument Ridge West parcel has many of the same issues, planning for high density, with the county paving and expanding Beacon Lite Road and lanes to enter and exit on County Line Road. This parcel also had a significant issue with insufficient available water to support the desired density. At the recent Monument Town Council meeting, after two hours of public comment, the council voted no with a 5-2 vote. Larson expressed disappointment that the town and developer could not reach a compromise. The next step, he said, was for the developer to take its plans to the county, who will be the governing body. He requested that the community remain active. Mayor Pro Tem Steve King, who was in attendance, noted that this area is not open space; it is undeveloped land. The developer has some rights, he explained, noting that the town would like to annex the property under its guidelines. The Monument Town Council would like to bring it in under Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning, respecting the land and preserving the trees. Voting no is not the end, he said, and the town is actively working on the next steps.

For more on the Monument Ridge annexation, see the article on the Monument Town Council meeting on page 1 and the Monument Planning Commission meeting on page 4.

### Renewable water projects

Secretary Roy Martinez, who is also a board member at Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) with an extensive background in water, noted that water is a big topic with many challenges, such as supply, availability, draining reservoirs, lowering aquifers, water quality, and contaminants of concern such as pharmaceuticals and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) or "forever chemicals." Aging infrastructure and workforce are a concern, as well as indirect and direct potable reuse (IPR and DPR). He said that many don't realize that water is a high-tech industry but also needs accountants and MBAs. When you turn on the tap, he said, good quality water is always there due to the fabulous job done by local agencies. He referenced a document he had sent around by the American Water Works Association, called the State of the Water Industry report, which listed top issues as aging infrastructure, long-term water supply, the public value of water re-

sources, water source protection, and aging workforce.

Martinez introduced Jim McGrady, who has worked as a district manager for 22 years and is the current general manager of Triview Metropolitan District (TMD). McGrady, who has been with TMD for six years, has advanced the ball down the field quite a way for renewable water, Martinez said, noting that the pipeline installation on Roller Coaster Road for the Northern Delivery System (NDS) is about 50% done.

TMD provides water, wastewater, stormwater, park and open space management, and road service on the east side of Monument. TMD serves 2,697 single-family equivalents, which include 78 commercial properties and 53 irrigation customers. TMD is located entirely within the Arkansas River Basin, and its current water supply is 100% Denver Basin groundwater (DBG). Given the concerns with depleting aquifers, TMD felt that if it could get renewable water in place, it could help preserve the DBG. Toward that end, TMD has acquired various renewable water rights and contracts as well as storage space to manage the variability and to recapture reusable return flows.

TMD has focused on partnerships to allow it to avoid construction, such as making use of the Southern Delivery System (SDS) infrastructure and contracting with Colorado Springs Utilities to convey, treat, and deliver water. TMD will use a reclaimed gravel pit for water storage in what is now called the Stonewall Springs South Reservoir complex. The NDS, which is expected to deliver water to TMD by 2024, is being funded through tap fees and renewable water fees.

For more information on TMD, see <http://triviewmetro.com>. For more information on the NDS project, see <https://triviewnws.org>.

Martinez then introduced Jessie Shaffer, district manager for WWSD, who is a Colorado native who graduated with a bachelor's in engineering from the Colorado School of Mines and a master's in business administration from Colorado Christian University. Shaffer has 21 years of experience as a design professional focusing exclusively on water and wastewater. He has been the district manager of WWSD for 15 years and is currently focused on redundancy, resiliency, and sustainability. Shaffer also serves as the president of the board for the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA).

Shaffer said that the Town of Monument, Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD), Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD), and WWSD have come together over the past two years to form a new water authority through an intergovernmental agreement. The goal is to pool and share resources and leverage all their assets to build infrastructure that would allow water, including treated effluent, that is flowing south in Monument and Fountain Creeks to be stored at Calhan Reservoir at Woodmoor Ranch and then pumped back north to be used by customers of the participating districts.

The concept is not new, Shaffer said, with studies having been done as far back as 2011 when WWSD purchased what was then called JV Ranch, which came with very senior water rights and a reservoir. One of the studies looked at options on how to capture reusable water, some of which is reusable to extinction. He noted that half of the water delivered to customers is irrigated outdoors and evaporates while the other half gets captured in the wastewater treatment system. He noted that many water districts have or will soon have plans for IPR and/or DPR. The game plan is to construct a treatment plant by the reservoir for water diverted by the Chilcott Ditch and pump it up north via a pipeline owned by CMD, along with some additional construction of pipeline into the northern part of the Loop area. One possible future option would be to use the Upper Black Squirrel Designated Groundwater Basin, a shallow aquifer for non-evaporative storage.

By pooling resources, the Loop could achieve economies of scale, lowering costs and increasing efficiency, redundancies, and resiliency. The Loop can capture most of its participating entities' return flows and Fountain Creek water supplies. The Loop would enable regional well field management and storage with opportunities to reduce evaporation and streamflow losses by piping the Chilcott Ditch and covering the Calhan reservoir in the future, Shaffer said. In 2022, the authority was formed via an IGA and was awarded \$4 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fund grant dollars to evaluate and move forward with the project.

In 2023, EPCRLWA has been refining the cost-sharing and business models, will study the operations and

NEPCO (Cont. on 20)

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