

**BOCC (Cont. from 1)**

in the interest of full transparency. The commissioners noted that the application was a major matter for Palmer Lake and directed county staff to continue to work with the town on it. Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez said his first feedback would be that he would like to see the town accept the maintenance of certain county roads and maintain access to Ben Lomand Mountain.

The matter is ongoing.

**2024 budget adopted**

At the Jan. 9 meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously to adopt and appropriate the \$491.6 million 2024 bud-

get. Its adoption normally takes place in December, but it was postponed due to the special legislative session that took place at the state assembly.

Commissioner Gonzalez said, "I think this budget really addresses the needs of the community and [is] a great prioritization of public safety, roads." Commissioner Stan VanderWerf said, "I appreciate calling it the recession-proof budget because we're not 100% sure where 2024 is going to go and we have held reserve dollars in this budget in case we have an economic downturn."

The commissioners went on to certify the 2023 mill levy for property taxes

payable in 2024. Nikki Simmons, chief financial officer, said the mill levy of 7.192 mills was significantly lower than the overall authorized mill levy of 8.46 mills due to the TABOR cap. It represents an almost 17% reduction in the county's portion of property tax bills.

Commissioner Carrie Geitner commented, "TABOR is the hero here. I'm happy for us to pass this but I would never want to lose sight of the fact that when the entire state was scrambling and trying to figure out what to do about these increases, regardless there was always a plan in El Paso County for the El Paso-specific taxes and that's because TABOR always does its job of limiting government growth in this situation."

**Chair and vice chair reappointed**

Also at the Jan. 9 BOCC meeting, the commissioners voted 4-1 to reappoint Commissioner Cami Bremer as chair and Commissioner Carrie Geitner as vice chair. Commissioner Gonzalez, who had put himself forward as a candidate for the position of chair, was the nay vote.

**Hill subdivision approved**

At the Jan. 25 BOCC land use meeting, the commissioners approved an application to subdivide a Black Forest property into three residential lots. The application came to the BOCC with a recommendation for approval from the Planning Commission. See the El Paso County Planning Commission article below.

**Other decisions**

- Jan. 9—the commissioners approved the issuance of an ambulance permit to Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District dba Monument Fire District. The six-month permit runs until June 1, 2024.

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The BOCC meets weekly, and the next meeting will be at 9 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 6. The commissioners will also meet on Feb. 8 and 22 at 9 a.m. to consider land use items.

Helen Walklett can be reached at [helenwalklett@ocn.me](mailto:helenwalklett@ocn.me).

*El Paso County Planning Commission, Jan. 4 and 18*

**Black Forest subdivision recommended for approval**

By Helen Walklett

The El Paso County Planning Commission (EPCPC) met twice during January and considered a minor subdivision application for a Black Forest property.

**Hill minor subdivision**

At the first EPCPC meeting of the year, the commissioners voted unanimously to recommend for approval a subdivision request for a Black Forest property.

The application by Douglas and Katherine Hill would see the 14.69-acre property, east of Black Forest Road and south of Hodgen Road, subdivided into three residential lots. All three lots would have access to Black Forest Road via the existing driveway which would be re-dedicated as a private road named Alpaca Heights. Because Black Forest Road is classified as a section line road, properties with frontage onto it are permitted to have a minimum

lot size of 4.75 acres. The property currently has a residential home, garage, and horse stable on it, and these would remain on the proposed lot 1.

The request was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion, and was then heard at the El Paso Board of County Commissioners land use meeting on Jan. 25. See BOCC article on page 1.

**Highway 83 access plan**

The commissioners were scheduled to adopt the Highway 83 Access Control Plan at the Jan. 18 meeting. However, this was moved to the March 7 meeting at the request of staff. Details of the plan were presented to staff at the Dec. 7 meeting. See [https://www.ocn.me/v24n1.htm?zoom\\_highlight=acp](https://www.ocn.me/v24n1.htm?zoom_highlight=acp)

Helen Walklett can be reached at [helenwalklett@ocn.me](mailto:helenwalklett@ocn.me).

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 **Kiwanis**  
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Open Meetings Saturdays, 146 N. Jefferson — 8:00am

**STARS OF TOMORROW TALENT COMPETITION**

Stars of Tomorrow is a professionally-judged, performing arts talent show for students living in the boundaries of or attend L-P D 38 grades 1 – 12.

**Application, Fee & Audition Rules**

Participants must live within Lewis-Palmer School District D-38 borders or attend school in D-38.

Application deadline: Received by February 10, 2024, \$10 per act (checks made payable to Monument Hill Kiwanis Club).

Use the QR code below or go to: [www.monumenthillkiwanis.org](http://www.monumenthillkiwanis.org) to apply online or download an application.

Auditions – Saturday, February 24, 2024  
Rehearsals – Saturday, March 16, 2024  
Show – Sunday, March 17, 2024

Notification of inclusion in auditions will be sent to all applicants by February 19, 2024.

Auditioners will be notified by March 1<sup>st</sup> whether they will be performing.

**Auditions are competitive! Come prepared as show-ready.**

You will be rated on: Talent, Technique & Artistry, Presentation, Stage Presence & Selection of Material

**Prizes**

Elementary (1-5) - \$500  
Middle School (6-8) - \$750 1<sup>st</sup>, \$500 2<sup>nd</sup>  
High School (9-12) - \$2,000 1<sup>st</sup>, \$1,000 2<sup>nd</sup>, \$500 3<sup>rd</sup>

