

developing strategies for negotiations, and instructing negotiators as it relates to potential development incentives.

Sheffield confirmed that after the board returned to the regular meeting, no action was taken, and the meeting promptly adjourned at

9:12 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of the month at the district office located at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. A public hearing will be held at the next regular board meet-

ing scheduled for May 23 at 5:30 p.m. For meeting agendas, minutes, and updates, visit <https://triviewmetro.com>.

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El Paso Board of County Commissioners, April 9, 11, and 16

Wildfire mitigation urged as Black Forest slash and mulch program opens for season

By Helen Walklett

During April, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) made decisions relating to the Black Forest slash and mulch program and a Black Forest rezone application.

Black Forest slash and mulch program

At its April 9 meeting, the BOCC approved the 2024 memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Black Forest Slash and Mulch Committee (SAMCOM), the nonprofit responsible for the program's daily operation.

This wildfire mitigation program, staffed entirely by volunteers, accepts slash (tree debris including branches and leaves) from residents that is ground into mulch, which is available free of charge to the public. The program does not accept bulk loads of needles, tree stumps, roots, weeds or grass.

Under the MOU, the county contributes up to \$40,000 toward grinder expenses, and SAMCOM provides \$12,000 toward the costs.

The site, within Black Forest Section 16 on the east side of Herring Road and just south of Shoup Road, opened for the 2024 season for slash drop-off on April 27. Normal business hours are Saturdays and Sundays 7 a.m.-4 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday evenings 5-7:30 p.m. Sundays between 7 a.m. and noon are for slash drop-off only. The last date for slash drop-off this year is Sept. 15. The drop-off fee for slash has increased this year to \$10 per pickup truck. There is a loyalty card available that offers a discount.

Free mulch will be available for self-loading from May 18 through Sept. 21. For large quantities of mulch, an end loader will be available on Saturdays only, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., charging \$5 per bucket.

Describing the program as wonderful, Commissioner Holly Williams said, "I certainly encourage all of our Black Forest residents, as well as many of our northeastern Colorado Springs residents, to take advantage and to keep wildfire mitigation efforts on your property up to date."

For more information, visit www.bfslash.org. Anyone wanting to volunteer to work a shift can do so via the website.

Vessey Road rezone

At their April 11 land use meeting, the commissioners voted to approve an application by Pawel Posorski for a rezoning of 6.02 acres from RR-5 (rural residential) to RR-2.5 (rural residential). The property is located at 6225 Vessey Road, one-half mile east of the intersection of Vessey Road and Neva Lane. A final plat application has also been submitted to create two lots from the parcel. This is currently under review and has not yet been scheduled for a public hearing.

The application was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion. The application came from the Planning Commission with an 8-1 vote recommending approval. Commissioners Christopher Whitney was the nay vote, having concerns about the zoning not being consistent with the area and about the non-conformity of

lots in the area. See https://www.ocn.me/v24n4.htm?zoom_highlight=%22vessey+road%22.

Ambulance license and permits

At the April 16 meeting, the commissioners approved an ambulance service license and two ambulance permits for the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District. At the previous week's meeting, Commissioner Stan VanderWerf commented on the fact that the state had recently passed a statute that will take away local authorities' power to issue ambulance permits beginning in July. These will now be issued at the state level. He said, "The law is the law, but this is just another example of centralization of power in Denver that I know in the long run will not be good for the State of Colorado when local governments know best what our local communities need."

The El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) usually meets every Tuesday at 9 am at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Agendas and meetings can be viewed at www.agendasuite.org/iip/el Paso. Information is available at 719-520-643. BOCC land use meetings are normally held the second and fourth Thursdays of the month (as needed) at 1 pm in Centennial Hall.

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El Paso County Planning Commission, April 18

Old Denver Road property requesting rezone to commercial

By Helen Walklett

At the El Paso County Planning Commission meeting on April 18, the commissioners heard a request to rezone an 8.07-acre property at 16050 Old Denver Road from RR-5 (rural residential) to CS (commercial service). The property is one-half mile north of the intersection of Baptist Road and Old Denver Road. The application was originally scheduled as a consent item, meaning there would be no discussion, but was pulled and heard as a regular item at the request of Commissioner Christopher Whitney, who had questions about the interplay of placetype (from the county's master plan) and zoning.

Discussion at the hearing focused on the existing duplex on the property, which is not an allowed use by right under the CS zoning and would require a variance of use. Staff has pro-

posed a condition to the zoning approval that would see the duplex remain until it's vacant for more than a year, is removed, or is repurposed for a use permitted within the CS zoning district when commercial development occurs.

Nina Ruiz, with Vertex Consulting Services and representing the owner, All In Investments LLC, said, "If they [the owner] were to develop this property as warehousing, mini-warehousing and outside storage, those types of uses, it's very possible that they could convert a portion of the structure into an office because they would need an office, and then the other portion could remain a caretaker's quarters. That would be included within the site development plan."

There was no public comment. The Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend the application for approval, and it is now due to

be heard at the El Paso Board of County Commissioners land use meeting on May 9.

The El Paso County Planning Commission normally meets the first and (as required) the third Thursday of each month at the Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live-streamed on the El Paso County News and Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Information is available at 719-520-6300 and <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/planning-community-development/2024-hearings-schedule/>.

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Woodmoor Improvement Association, April 24

Board member passes away



Above: At the April 24 meeting of the Woodmoor Improvement Association, President Brian Bush announced the passing of Covenants Director Per Suhr. Suhr was a longtime resident of Woodmoor and had served on the WIA board for many years in various capacities. He will be sorely missed, Bush said, extending the board's condolences to his family. *Photo courtesy of Woodmoor Improvement Association.*

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board met on April 24 and announced the death of one of its members. The board also heard a response from a resident on a covenant issue and heard director reports.

Board Director Per Suhr passes away

Before hearing director reports, President Brian Bush invoked presidential reports to announce, with great sadness, the death of Covenant Director Per Suhr. He was found deceased in his home on April 19 at age 81. He had just returned from

a golfing trip to Laughlin, Nev. with fellow country club members. Suhr was a longtime resident of Woodmoor and had served on the WIA board for more years than anyone could count, including the past nine years alongside Bush. He was also a golfing buddy, friend, and colleague, said Bush, and his wisdom, integrity, and humor will be sorely missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him. The board sends its condolences to his wife Alice, son Drew and daughter Shannon. Vice President Peter Bille will oversee covenant enforcement until the board appoints a replacement.

Resident response

Resident Jennifer Davis returned to the board to respond to the letter she received on her concerns that a neighbor had built a shed inside an easement. Referring to a letter from Bush, she said it had some factual errors. She noted that it said she had 14 days to respond after the Architectural Control Committee (ACC) approval, but since a shed is a miscellaneous project, it did not require noticing of the neighbors. She noted that no one in the meeting was a surveyor but that there were nearby rebar and surveyor caps which could be used to measure the location, and she claimed that it was not "very close" to the easement but two feet into the easement. The letter noted that the ACC approval was based on WIA's Project Design Standards Manual (PDSM) and covenant restrictions. However, she cited the South Woodmoor Covenants as saying "no buildings, fences, or structures of any type shall be built over, across, in the line of, or in such a manner as to include such easements in the lot or tract."

Davis further objected to the letter which claimed she was trying to weaponize the covenants and paint her as someone who is trying to cause trouble. She said she called attention to the board that a mistake was made and needed to be rectified and the board does not want to go down that path. The board, she said, is setting a precedent and, by allowing the shed to stay where it is, it would now let others build fences in the easement. She said that the board noted that it did not want to get involved in a lawsuit, but that it might have to and that she had already spoken with counsel. It would be unfortunate, she said, if the neighbors have to get together to get a judge to make the board do its job.

Bush responded that, based on her comments at the previous meeting, the board had sent the covenants administrator out to do measurements and found her allegations to be unsupported. Although he had noted that overreaching by some HOAs had resulted in difficult legislation, the main reason for the board's response was that, after re-measurement, it believes the shed complies within an inch or two. We simply disagree on the facts, he said, and the matter has to stop here. You have our decision, he concluded.

Board highlights

- Bush reported for Treasurer Connie Brown that he had reviewed the financial statements and expenses and income both look good. He noted that the board is making more in interest income than expected, and less in Barn and office rentals.
- Homeowners Association Administrator Denise Cagliaro said that WIA had mailed