

to their neighboring jurisdiction as an operational model despite occasional imbalances that may arise in aid given versus aid received. On the other hand, Truty described automatic aid as “a formal arrangement between two jurisdictions where one will automatically dispatch resources into a neighboring jurisdiction as part of an initial response.” As soon as the county sheriff dispatcher software recognizes that the dispatch address is in an area designated as an automatic aid address, the county dispatcher software will simultaneously send a dispatch to the other jurisdiction, because the latter will likely arrive first. Truty added that those secondary units “automatically respond” rather than wait for the first jurisdiction’s fire crew to verbally ask the county dispatcher for assistance. TLMFPD and DWFPD belong to the North Group, which combines automatic aid and mutual aid agreements between districts.

Revenue and oversight

Burns described revenue sources for DWFPD as the property tax base; a special ownership tax from license renewals, new car sales, and registrations; and deployment to national forest fires and other large incidents. A five-person elected board ensures that the chief has the tools necessary to operate and oversees the district’s fiscal accountability.

Note: Wescott’s mill levy was last increased from 1.94 mills to 7.0 mills in 2004 to finance full-time service. See www.ocn.me/v4n4.htm#jfpd,

Truty stated that property taxes and emergency medical service (EMS) billing support TLMFPD, and the board is composed of seven individuals.

Note: Tri-Lakes Fire Authority raised its mill levy from

7.0 mills to 8.5 mills in the Nov. 5, 2007 election (www.ocn.me/v6n12.htm#tlmfra), and from 8.5 mills to 11.5 mills in the Nov. 5, 2012 election. www.ocn.me/v12n12.htm#tlmfpd

Both districts plan to propose mill levy increases in the fall.

Insurance Services Organization (ISO) ratings

Bumgarner discussed Insurance Services Organization (ISO) ratings, which rank the ability of a fire district to effectively handle a fire within its own boundaries. Bumgarner and Burns listed apparatus, communications, staffing, training, and dispatching as some of the criteria used to determine the rating on a scale from 1 to 10, with a “1” being the best. TLMFPD and DWFPD have “3” ratings (where there are hydrants.) Bumgarner added that the impact of a fire district’s ISO rating on a homeowner’s insurance has more to do with the individual insurance company than the fire district’s ISO rating. (Note: Bumgarner said that in areas within these two districts with no hydrants, the ISO rating is now 3Y.)

In summary, the fire districts promote fire mitigation on individual properties, and engagement and communication to and from the community as the best means for safeguarding properties from fire.

Transportation Committee update

Tom Vierzba, NEPCO vice president, summarized the Transportation and Land Use Committee’s commentary pertaining to various road projects throughout Tri-Lakes. He confirmed that the county is planning a roundabout, instead of a traffic signal, for the Gleneagle-Struthers in-

terchange, but a completion time frame is not available. The Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA) restored funding for Beacon Lite Road improvements due to additional revenues and cost savings in 2016. The section of I-25 that extends from Monument to Castle Rock, known as “The Gap,” remains a top priority. Funding also exists for improvements on Monument Hill Road and State Highway 105 beginning in 2018.

NEPCO presented a tentative 2017 program schedule of forums and speakers:

- May 13 – HOA attorney Lenard Rioth
- July 15 – Water districts’ General Managers Forum
- Sep. 9 – County Commissioner Darryl Glenn
- Nov. 18 – Energy Providers Forum

NEPCO’s mission is to promote communication and interaction among HOAs of northern El Paso County, exchange ideas on topics of common interest, and develop collective responses to the county on issues affecting the quality of life of NEPCO member associations. NEPCO meets every other month on the second Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon in the Monument Town Hall conference room, located at 645 Beacon Lite Rd. off Highway 105. The next meeting is scheduled for May 13.

All formal and informal HOAs in northern El Paso County are invited to join NEPCO and should call Bob Swedenburg at 481-2723 or visit the website www.nepco.org. Other websites of interest are <http://wescottfire.org>, <http://www.tlmfire.org>, and <https://www.greeducation.org/statistics-faqs/funding-faqs/tabor-gallagher>

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Woodmoor Improvement Association Board of Directors, March 22

Forestry director named; concerns about Walters property

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board met on March 22 to announce the new director of Forestry, hear concerns about the possible sale of the Walters property, and approve reserve study expenditures. Directors Robert Benjamin and Brad Gleason were absent.

Citizen comments on Walters property

Resident John Ottino, former WIA president, who regularly walks his dog on the undeveloped Walters property north of Higby and east of Jackson Creek, reported that he spoke with an appraiser who was on the property. The appraiser indicated that the Walters family was considering selling the property, which is zoned for single-family residences. Ottino raised concerns about potential development and asked the board to consider setting a minimum lot size or modifying the Project Design Standards Manual (PDSM) to set limits. Ottino explained the history of Walters property, the nearby development of the Pulte townhomes, and previous statements about setting up a conservation easement. (For more information, search on <http://ocn.me> for related articles.)

Vice President Brian Bush noted that WIA has never regulated minimum lot size and questioned the justification for doing so now. It was noted that the covenants for Woodmoor do define the minimum dwelling size (Article V, Section 2) and required setbacks (Article V, Section 3). Ottino stated that no one wanted to see houses packed in and noted that Woodmoor had few open spaces. Ottino offered to share documentation from his personal files on previous statements about a possible conservation easement.

New Forestry director given additional authority

President Peter Bille announced the appointment of resident Ed Miller as director of Forestry. Director Bush moved to delegate the authority to review and approve all tree requests and Firewise lot evaluations as they pertain to project application packets without prior approval or consultation of the Architectural Control Committee (ACC) for the calendar year 2017. The authority of ACC to approve the clearing of trees is covered by Article V, Section 8 of the declarations of protective covenants. The motion was passed unanimously.

Reserve study expenditures approved

The board considered and unanimously approved expenditures for the reserve study to dredge Hidden Pond and replace conference room chairs. ACC and Commons Area Administrator Bob Pearsall indicated that it was the perfect time and conditions to dredge the pond; he was able to save \$11,000 from the estimated cost. The pond will be dredged and the area under Deer Creek Road will be graded to better define the streambed to avoid flooding. This will be paid for out of budgeted funds from reserves and not from operating funds.

Vice President Bush noted that conference room chairs are falling apart need to be replaced. He made a motion to replace 12 chairs for an amount not to exceed \$3,000 from the reserve study. The new chairs will have a lifetime guarantee, and the board will attempt to recover the cost by selling the old chairs. The motion passed unanimously.

Board report highlights

- Mountain pine beetle evidence was identified in a tree in the Hidden Pond area, and the tree is marked and scheduled to be removed by a contractor. See information on the mountain pine beetle at <https://www.woodmoor.org/forestry-firewise/>. WIA will save some cross-sections of the tree for display.
- Director Jennifer Cunningham reported that The Great American Cleanup will be held on April 22 and there will be three local locations. See <http://gacppp.com> to register to participate.
- The Stamp Out Hunger food collection will occur on the second Saturday in May. Residents can leave non-perishable food at their mailbox for delivery to Tri-Lakes Cares.
- Treasurer Hanson reported that WIA is on solid financial standing and is ahead of schedule on collecting annual dues.

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 will be on April 26. The WIA calendar can be found at <https://www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/>. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at <https://www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/> once approved and posted.

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March Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

March came in like a lamb and stayed that way for most of the month, before finally going out like a lion. After record warmth and dryness for the first three weeks of the month, the pattern finally changed and brought some much-needed moisture. Of course, we usually don’t come out of exceptionally dry and warm periods gracefully, and this time was no different as a quick but powerful blizzard changed things on March 24.

The record warmth and dry weather dominated the region from March 1 through March 23. Temperatures were above average every day except on the 1st and 2nd and these days were a little below normal, mainly because overnight lows were chilly, reaching the single digits both mornings. But these cold temperatures were soon a distant memory, as temperatures from the 3rd to the 18th were above normal, except on the 6th. High temperatures hit the upper 50s and low 60s from the 3rd to the 5th. A quick shot of cool weather moved in on the 6th and even produced a brief snow show-

er during the morning that if you blinked you might have missed. Even more unusual was that this turned out to be our only precipitation through March 23rd, very unusual for March, normally one of our more active weather months.

After the 6th, warm weather quickly returned as a strong ridge of high pressure re-established itself over the region. This blocked any storms from moving into the area, and the lack of snow on the ground and dry conditions allowed temperatures to soar. Every afternoon from the 8th through the 18th reached the 60s and even low 70s, the only exceptions being some upper 40s on the 11th and mid 50s on the 13th. Temperatures reached record high levels on several afternoons, with monthly record highs reached for the second month in a row on the 18th. This is highly unusual for any single month, but to set new monthly record highs in consecutive months is almost unheard of.

Making things even more extreme was the fact that no precipitation fell except for brief flurries on the morning of the 6th and we now have had two months in a row of dry

and warm weather. This combined with a dry and warm fall and early winter to produce what will likely be record low snow amounts for the season. Also, many of the plants in the region were getting “tricked” into thinking winter was over, which of course it wasn’t.

But just when you thought spring had sprung, winter made an abrupt return. The first signs of changes moved in late on the 23rd as bands of rain showers moved over the region. Cooler air continued to rush into the region as an area of low pressure wound up over southeastern Colorado. Around midnight, the rain began to switch over to heavy, wet snow. At the same time, winds began to strengthen as air rushed into the center of the low pressure. This produced blizzard conditions during much of the morning hours as winds as high as 60 mph blew the heavy snow into significant drifts and created near zero visibility at times. I-25 was closed for several hours as well between Castle Rock and Colorado Springs. As often happens during late March through April, elevation plays a key role in rain versus snow