

Monument Board of Trustees, Sept. 18

Residents ask why growth can't be better planned

By Lisa Hatfield

The Monument Board of Trustees heard public comments begging the town to put professional planning staff behind vital land-use decisions to maintain the small-town identity that so many residents and the 2017 Comprehensive Plan support. Before the Sept. 18 meeting, Town Manager Chris Lowe presented a summary of proposed water capital improvement plan projects that town staff recommended. The trustees also considered and then postponed a request from Village Center Metropolitan District to amend its service plan.

Mayor Jeff Kaiser was excused.

Public demands more restrictions on types of growth

During public comments, Allison Catalano of Grow Smart Monument got a round of applause from the audience after she asked the trustees if Monument had any restrictions on types of stores moving into the town. She said at the Sept. 13 Monument Planning Commission (MPC) meeting, "a multi retail spot was changed to a single retail spot," which would allow yet another tire store to move in, this one right next to a residential area. Note: in fact, the MPC denied this request, but it will still move on to the board of trustees. See related MPC article on page 19.

"Do we have any kind of restrictions that would (legally) allow us to stop an adult retail store from moving in next to the library?" Catalano asked. "Or a tattoo parlor or a pawn shop wanting to move in next to In the Moo? I have nothing against those businesses, but towns can make choices about what they want in their communities... It is time for paid professionals to take over this role." She also implored the town to work with haste to combine "crazy, disjointed, and overlapping districts into one so that growth can be planned in a cohesive manner... We are weak when we are divided."

Six other speakers echoed Catalano's remarks, adding comments about missing sidewalks, the need for diversification of amenities and stores, appropriate comingling of land uses, the need for more schools, and weeds in medians.

Remington Hill resident Kathryn Johnson said she participated in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan focus groups but now felt it was a waste of time, because, "no one told me that the small-town atmosphere only meant downtown. East of the highway, we are being treated like gutter wash. I paid three times the cost of my prior home in Colorado Springs to avoid having

that in my backyard, but 'Autopalooza' is what I am living in."

Note: The town controls land use planning and decision-making, including what new businesses can come in and where sidewalks are required to be built, for all parts of Monument including within Triview Metropolitan District, where about two-thirds of the town's resident live. Principal Planner Larry Manning and Planner Jennifer Jones deal with applicants and prepare staff reports for consideration when needed by the Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees. Meanwhile, Triview is responsible for landscape, streets, park maintenance, and water and sanitation services within its district.

Neither Manning nor Jones attended the Sept. 18 meeting.

The Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education is responsible for school building. See related LSPD article on page 7 including information on its long-term planning.

Water capital improvement plan presentation

Lowe presented a summary of the 2018 Water Capital Improvements Plan for key components of Monument's potable water service area, which is entirely on the west side of I-25. (Triview Metropolitan District and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District also supply potable water to some town residents on the east side of the highway.) His comments included:

- Management of return flows is not a luxury; it is a necessity to take advantage of water we already own that flows down the creek now without being recovered, treated, and reused. At least three options are under consideration by the town.
- Regionalization is not a choice; it is survival. Monument must take the lead in regionalization and take advantage of economies of scale regarding storage and transportation of renewable water, but this board must give us direction to do this. It is time for us as to tell other entities that the train is leaving the station. They need a deadline.
- Renewable water sources will require buying renewable water rights, finding ways to transport the water uphill 30 miles or more, and developing a reservoir for storing that water here.

See related NEPCO article on page 22 mentioning delays in the purchase of Home Place Ranch by Challenger Homes, delaying negotiations on a possible reservoir site. Lowe said Challenger Homes has al-

ready done some design work with the town's planning department.

Lowe explained that the staff agreed that finding a connection with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) to bring renewable water to Monument was not what they wanted to pursue due to the very high known costs, the series of likely additional costs, delayed timelines, and lack of control that connecting with CSU as a water supply would include. (See <https://prezi.com/view/kgHnwYKVVAUjuQ7clbfM/> for the complete presentation including cost estimates for the next five years totaling tens of millions of dollars. For background, see www.ocn.me/v17n7.htm#mbot, www.ocn.me/v17n7.htm#mbot0619, www.ocn.me/v17n8.htm#mbot)

Village Center Metro District decision postponed to Oct. 2

Lowe presented a resolution approving an amendment to the service plan for the Village Center Metropolitan District (VCMD), which is within the town. VCMD has filed a petition to amend its service plan to increase its mill levy from 35 to 50 mills because the district is not producing enough revenue to make its full debt service payment and cannot fund an operations reserve account for street, storm sewer, and landscaping major repair.

The district also requested that the town take over its snow removal, maintenance, and repair of public streets. For background, see www.ocn.me/v17n7.htm#mbot.

Lowe said if the town takes on those responsibilities, it would be paid for by property and sales taxes. Engineering Assistant Tom Martinez had estimated roughly \$620,000 over the next five years for street repairs including resurfacing. Public Works Superintendent Ron Rathburn also submitted a wide range of estimates for snowplowing varying intensities of snowstorms. These figures did not match the ones presented by VCMD, and the consensus was that firm cost estimates were needed for the discussion to continue.

After many questions and discussion, the trustees voted unanimously to postpone their vote on the two-part resolution to the Oct. 2 meeting.

The meeting went into executive session at 7:59 p.m. to consult with the town attorney about the town manager's contract. Town Clerk Laura Hogan said no votes or announcements were made afterward.

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Monument Board of Trustees, Oct. 2

Board overrules planning commission on two items

By Lisa Hatfield

On Oct. 2, the Monument Board of Trustees made two land-use decisions that went against what the planning commission had recommended concerning the Les Schwab Tire Center site plan amendment and the Monument Ridge sketch plan that would determine its designated use. They approved a new landscaping ordinance, heard about multiple communication options from the town, and left Village Center Metropolitan District's (VCMD) service plan unchanged.

Trustee Kelly Elliott was excused.

Monument Ridge high-density sketch plan denied

Planner Jennifer Jones presented an amendment to the Monument Ridge Planned Development (PD) Sketch Plan regarding 10 acres east of the Fairfield Inn, southeast of Struthers Road and Baptist Road, and immediately north of a neighborhood of residential homes on five-acre lots in unincorporated El Paso County.

Jones said in 2005, the site in question was designated for multifamily residential with density of 10 to 12 dwelling units per acre (DU/acre). Then in the 2010 PD site plan approval changed it to a commercial designated use. The applicant, Challenger Homes, is requesting the designated use be amended from Community Commercial to multifamily residential with a density of 20 to 24 (DU/acre).

She clarified that for land that is zoned PD, a PD sketch plan is what assigns the designated use. In the future, the applicant would come back before the board with a Final PD Site Plan application that would deal with specifics on a proposed project, but

that would not be the time to do a further review of land use or density.

Jones' comments included:

- Past traffic studies predicted that multifamily use would generate significantly less traffic than commercial use would.
- Only 4 percent of the town's developed residential acreage is multifamily.
- The Monument Planning Commission (MPC) approved the request by a 3-2 vote. (See related MPC article on page 19.)
- The only other development in Monument close to this proposed density might be The Vistas apartments at about 19 DU/acre.

During public comments, no one spoke either for or against this item.

Trustee Greg Coopman said people overwhelmingly said in surveys on the comprehensive plan that they did not want to see high-density housing in Monument.

Mayor Pro-Tem Don Wilson said that if residents really wanted the best and brightest young teachers to move into the area and teach in this exceptional school district, they need more affordable housing options.

The application failed by a tied 3-3 vote. Trustees Dennis Murphy, Coopman, and Jeff Bornstein voted no.

Les Schwab Tire Center amendment approved

In December 2015, the board of trustees approved the site plan for a Qdoba restaurant and a 9,600-square-foot "inline retail establishment" on the northeast

corner of Jackson Creek Parkway and Leather Chaps Drive. See www.ocn.me/v16n1.htm#mbot1210. Jones said on Oct. 2 that the proposed Les Schwab Tire Center is a use by right in the Planned Mix Use (PMD) zone, and that the specific use of the site was not up for debate. The reason for the amendment application was the significant changes to the site plan due to the proposed building size of 10,000 square feet and revisions to the architecture.

Jones said there was nothing in the 2015 site plan approval that required "multi tenants." However, on Sept. 13, the Monument Planning Commission had denied the PD site plan amendment by 3-2 vote, citing concerns about it changing to a single tenant. Murphy, Bornstein, and Coopman asked questions about the decision-making criteria and how the planning commissioners were trained in the quasi-judicial land-use decision making process. Answering a question from Mayor Jeff Kaiser, Town Attorney Alicia Corley said there were some concerns that the planning commission motion was not based on appropriate approval criteria in the town code.

No members of the public spoke either for or against this amendment.

The trustees voted 5-1 to approve the amendment with the conditions that the tire storage area be moved inside the building and that they meet town landscaping criteria (which is currently being revised) that is in place when they make the site plan application. Murphy voted no.

Later in the meeting, the trustees asked for a joint training workshop with the planning commissioners about "Planning 101" and how they could legally make smart-growth planning decisions. Lowe said he