

that the master plan's consultants, Houseal-Lavigne Associates, would be in town in March and would like to interview the Planning Commission on March 19 ahead of the regular meeting.

Judy von Ahlefeldt, a long-time resident of Black Forest, addressed the commissioners concerning the development of the county master plan. She said Colorado Springs' newly adopted comprehensive plan was a good example of a plan that follows most of the best practices set out in the American Planning Association's document "Sustaining Places: Best Practices for Comprehensive Plans." Following up, Gebhart said the association's document would be placed in the upcoming master plan project folder on the county's online EDARP system to make it accessible. <https://epcdevplanreview.com/Public/ActiveList/>

At the Feb. 19 meeting, Commissioner Sharon Friedman was appointed as the primary representative for the Planning Commission on the steering committee for the county master plan. Commissioner Tom Bailey was appointed as the alternate. The commitment is expected to be for one meeting a month for the next year to 18 months, with the possibility that the schedule could become more intensive as the county gets closer to adopting the plan.

Special use request for Black Forest equine therapy clinic

At the Feb. 5 meeting, the commissioners heard a request for approval of a special use application to operate a commercial stable at 14445 Holmes Road in Black Forest. The property is located on the east side of Holmes Road and north of Vessey Road.

Kesti Suggs, the owner of the equine business operating on the site, and employee Erika Bakko ex-

plained to the commissioners that the nonprofit corporation, Reigning Hope, provided equine therapy activities in an enclosed outdoor arena and adjacent sensory trail as part of its occupational therapy offering to physically and emotionally disadvantaged individuals. The horses reside at the property. The business operates on an appointment basis with parking provided in the property's driveway. Suggs said the business was established in Florissant in 2008 and moved to its current location to be nearer to clients. There are potential plans to add a small indoor arena at some point subject to funds being available and a building permit being granted.

The application came about when a code enforcement officer, in the area on other business, noticed the stables. As the county's land development code makes no allowance for a classification of "equine therapy," the stables were deemed to be a commercial stable operating at a residential property. As the property is zoned RR-5 (rural residential) and only 4.15 acres it was in violation of the code because 10 acres are required for a commercial stable in this zoning district.

Len Kendall, Planner 1 with Planning and Community Development, explained the process that the owners were now going through to remedy the violation. He told the commissioners that no violation notice was sent out because the property owners and business owner began the process to remedy the illegal commercial stable use immediately after being notified by staff of the issue. The special use application was the next step in the process following approval of a lot variance by the Board of Adjustment in June 2018 to approve the smaller lot size. Assuming

the application was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission, it would then be heard by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). If the BOCC approved the application, then a site development plan application would follow.

Property owner Susanne Hoffman stated that she was unaware of the violation until it was brought to her attention because she had understood the previous owner had given riding lessons at the site. She said that she had received a huge amount of support for the business from neighbors.

Kendall said that of the neighbors notified of the application, two had objected. No one spoke in opposition at the hearing. The Black Forest Land Use Committee had responded that it had "no objection to this Special Use application and commends the applicants for their desire to help disadvantaged and handicapped people with this type of horse therapy."

Commissioner Sharon Friedmann said she is a 5-acre lot owner and found herself "a little split on this one" because, although she saw it as a very noble use, "I can imagine a variety of other noble things that would not necessarily fit into my personal view of rural residential character." Commissioner Kevin Curry also expressed some concerns but felt that they would be addressed by the regulatory process as it progressed.

The vote to recommend the application for approval was unanimous. It was then heard at the BOCC meeting on Feb. 26, where it received unanimous approval. (See the BOCC article on page 20.)

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Woodmoor Improvement Association Annual Meeting, Jan. 28 and Reorganization, Jan. 30

Board reviews 2018, sets goals for 2019



Above: On Jan. 28, due to snow closures, the Woodmoor Improvement Association held its annual meeting in The Barn instead of the usual location at Lewis-Palmer Middle School. The 2018 board, from right to left, are HOA administrator Denise Cagliaro, board members Rich Wretschko, Robert Benjamin, Ed Miller, Bert Jean, Peter Bille, Lee Hanson, Brad Gleason, Woodmoor Public Safety Chief Kevin Nielsen and, standing, board member Per Suhr looked on as President Brian Bush led the meeting, which included electing the 2019 board as well as highlights from the previous year and goals for the current year. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

By Jackie Burhans

President Brian Bush chaired the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) annual meeting Jan. 28, which featured guest speakers and provided a review of 2018, a discussion of goals for 2019, board candidate statements, and a question-and-answer session. The meeting was moved from Lewis-Palmer Middle School to The Barn due to a school snow closure. Later that week, a short reorganization meeting was held to assign board roles.

Speakers

Wildlife—The first speaker was Corey Adler, district wildlife manager for the Woodmoor area from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). Adler brought flyers on living with wildlife, including deer, raccoons, coyotes, and bears. He reminded residents not to feed the wildlife. Birdfeeders are OK but he asked that they be kept out of reach of deer and be taken down from April to November to avoid bear activity. He noted that feeding deer is not healthy for them and asked that people take hammocks down to avoid tangling deer antlers. He asked that residents call CPW only if they see wildlife behaving in a way that is unusual so that CPW can harass the animals with beanbag rounds to discourage them from interacting with humans. Adler confirmed there are few foxes due to mange and coyotes. He said there are no wolves in this area and people are probably seeing coyotes in full pelt.

Open space—Tish Norman, co-chair of the Walters Open Space committee, introduced committee members and said the group hopes to purchase the Walters property in South Woodmoor. She noted they have raised 76 percent of their goal. There are 172 homes bordering 100 of the 135 acres up for sale. Local homeowners are encouraged to purchase a por-

tion of the land adjacent to their properties and leave the remaining land as a trail that might be donated to the YMCA or WIA. The Woodmoor Open Space Committee (WOSC) is an LLC working on the deal. She encouraged supporters to grab a sign or flyer and look for the GoFundMe fundraiser under the name Woodmoor Open Space and asked the WIA board to send information to all residents.

School district—This reporter let attendees know about the Strong D38 Community group that supports School District 38. She noted that several speakers referred to all the development in the area that has resulted in overcrowding at the middle school and the imminent installation of modular classrooms. She asked that groups look for Strong D38 on the web (www.strongd38.com) or on Facebook for upcoming informational meetings. A local resident noted her 9-year-old has 30 students in his class at Lewis-Palmer Elementary School. She said crowding is a huge problem at the middle school and at the elementary schools as well due to the growth in the area.

2018 highlights

Bush noted that this meeting would serve as both the annual meeting and the January meeting and confirmed that a quorum had been achieved for a valid board election. He noted that WIA is responsible for covenant enforcement, architectural control, and common area improvements and maintenance but is not responsible for road clearing or repairing, which falls to El Paso County authorities. Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) provides security, vacation checks, and more. He noted that the top three income sources are: dues, new construction fees, and Barn/office rentals. Top expenses are common area, forestry, pay for staff, and WPS.

Bush noted that board members are all volunteers and acknowledged the staff including administration, WPS, and board lawyer Lenard Rieth.

Highlights for the year included approving the addition of an American with Disabilities Act-compliant restroom on the main level of the Barn as well as an expansion to provide more room for WPS. WIA has increased mowing of common areas and included the sides of some roads as well. Bush noted that the WIA helped School District 38 obtain a Safe Routes to School grant by providing matching funds that would keep kids safe and be a benefit to residents as well. WIA complied with Colorado water law by augmenting Lower Twin and Wild Duck ponds while draining other ponds. They provided three chipping days at no cost to residents as well as grants for fire mitigation. For the second year in a row, there is no increase in the annual dues thanks to sound fiscal management by staff. The reserve fund is well funded and is used to cover planned maintenance and replacement of such items as vehicles, flooring, etc.

WPS has logged over 13,000 duty hours, driven nearly 71,000 miles and done over 12,000 vacation checks. WPS provided immediate officer response and Sheriff's Office assists and motorist assists. While helping manage traffic in an incident on Highway 105, a WPS Jeep was totaled, but that probably saved the lives of two firefighters who would have been hit. WPS had been helping to manage traffic during the construction on Deer Creek and Monument Hill Road. WPS appreciates the optional contribution they

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