

council for re-approval.

Administrator Green-Sinnard to retire

Cressman asked the council to appoint Valerie Remington, who currently serves as the town's financial officer and HR director, to replace the retiring Green-Sinnard on an interim basis. His motion was unanimously approved.

Liquor license transfer tabled

At the February work session, Gregory Duncan, owner of Dex's Depot, asked that the liquor license belonging to the restaurant that occupied the building before he took it over be transferred to his business. The council deferred action on this request at both the February and the March work sessions.

The council is scheduled to hold two meetings in April, on April 11 and 25 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, with the second meeting organized as a working session. Information: 481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Feb. 28, March 12, 19, 21, and 26

Willow Springs annexation impact report accepted; Master Plan Advisory Committee appointed

By Helen Walklett

The El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) accepted an annexation request from the Town of Monument at its March 26 meeting. It appointed members to the county Master Plan Advisory Committee at its March 12 meeting and received a presentation from the plan's consultants immediately after its regular meeting on March 19. The BOCC also approved the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Black Forest Slash and Mulch Committee (SAMCOM) at the end of February.

Willow Springs annexation request

At the March 26 BOCC meeting, the commissioners approved a request from the Town of Monument for acceptance of an annexation impact report. The proposed annexation relates to property currently within the county on the north side of West Baptist Road, to the west of the intersection of West Baptist Road, Old Denver Road, and Woodcarver Road. The property consists of three parcels of land that total about 219 acres.

The proposed development would involve the construction of up to 396 residential dwellings, which may include multi-family units, associated roadways, parks and open space, and landscaping. Access would be from Synthes Avenue on the north side with a through connection to Baptist Road/Forest Lakes Drive.

The Monument Board of Trustees was expected to hold an annexation hearing and consider the sketch plan for the development at its March 18 hearing, but the items were pulled from the agenda and are now expected to come before the board in May. See related March 18 Monument Board of Trustees article on page 17.

The board voted against annexing the same properties in October 2018. At that time, there were concerns that potential water shortages might not allow the town to provide adequate water to all the proposed homes. See www.ocn.me/v18n11.htm#mbot1015.

County Master Plan

Advisory Committee appointed

At its March 12 meeting, the BOCC approved the appointment of nine members to the Master Plan Advisory Committee. Members come from a range of backgrounds and from across the county and include a member of the El Paso County Planning Commission, one from the Fountain City Council, a planning consultant, a home-builder, and a business owner from Black Forest. The

BOCC also approved bylaws for the new committee.

Craig Dossey, executive director of the Planning and Community Development Department, described the committee as "an over-arching, countywide group that's going to look at the master plan holistically" but explained that subgroups would look in detail at land use in their individual areas, meaning that the people who actually live and do business in specific areas of the county would have more of a say as to how future planning would develop there.

Commissioner Holly Williams commented, "I do know I have two active groups in my area, the Black Forest Land Use Committee and NEPCO (the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations), and so, as we go through this planning process, they are going to be involved in the subcommittees and so we will be keeping an eye on that to make sure certain aspects of the preservation plan, especially for Black Forest, are addressed."

Directly after the March 19 meeting, the commissioners received a presentation from the master plan's consultants, Houseal-Lavigne Associates, which outlined the scope of the project and the steps involved in developing the plan over the next two years.

Black Forest slash and mulch program

Kathy Andrew, Environmental Division manager, Community Services Department, gave the 2018 end-of-season report to the BOCC meeting on Feb. 28 ahead of the commissioners voting unanimously to approve the 2019 MOU with SAMCOM.

The program, which began in 1994, accepts slash (tree debris including branches, leaves, needles, etc.) from residents that is ground into mulch that is available free of charge to the public.

Describing the program as "an incredible partnership," Andrew explained that under the MOU, the county contributes \$35,000 toward grinder expenses and SAMCOM provides \$10,000 toward the costs. If the costs exceed this \$45,000, the two parties divide any additional costs equally between them. The county coordinates the contract for the grinder and holds the lease for the site.

The site, at the southeast corner of Shoup and Herring Roads, will open for the 2019 season for slash drop-off on May 4. Normal business hours will be Saturdays 7 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sundays, noon-4 p.m., and Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 5-7:30 p.m.

El Paso County Planning Commission, March 5 and 19

High Plains, Settlers View plans advance

By Helen Walklett

At its March 19 meeting, the El Paso County Planning Commission recommended for approval applications relating to two developments within the Black Forest Preservation Plan area. The first was an application for a preliminary plan and final plat for The High Plains development north of Hodgen Road. The second was a final plat application for the Settlers View subdivision, again situated north of Hodgen Road. Ahead of regular business on March 19, the commissioners participated in a workshop with the county master plan consultants, Houseal-Lavigne Associates, to identify issues of importance and to outline the process and scope of work for developing the new plan.

High Plains proposed development

At its March 19 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended for approval applications by Savage Development Inc. for a preliminary plan and final plat for a 39.40-acre lot zoned RR-5 (rural residential) to create seven single-family residential lots and a right-of-way. The property is located half a mile west of Black Forest Road, on the north side of Hodgen Road.

Commissioner Sharon Friedman had questions about a deviation request made by the applicant to allow one of the lots direct access onto Hodgen Road, which is typically not permitted. County had approved the deviation with the condition that the lot provide adequate turnaround space so that vehicles do not have to reverse out onto Hodgen Road.

Friedman noted that the Black Forest Land Use Committee, when notified of the applications, had responded with support for the overall development but was concerned about lot 4 having this access. It had stated that, "We feel that lot 4 should access the cul-de-sac on a flag and not access Hodgen Road directly. This is a busy road at a busy intersection, and it is not safe to add a private driveway at this point on Hodgen." Friedman said, "With my knowledge of Hodgen Road and the statement that was in here [the packet] from the Black Forest people, I kind of agree with their point of view that we don't need any more people coming out onto Hodgen Road in that area at really low speeds."

County staff explained that the deviation was granted because the driveway access would be at a crest location, allowing clear sight lines in both directions, and said that the county engineer was satisfied. The land is split by a large floodplain that separates lot 4 from the other lots and there is a 20-foot difference in elevation between the two parts. Owner Jordan Savage told the commissioners that, "Because of the drainage that our site has, there is really no way to access lot 4 any other way. That 20-foot difference in elevation ... makes it impossible to do that and if you were to try to connect it somehow, it would cost a fortune."

Friedman asked what ability the Planning Commission might have to override decisions such as that of the county engineer and was told by Cole Emmons, senior assistant county attorney, that its role was to weigh the

The last date for slash drop-off is Sept. 15. There is a \$2 drop-off fee for slash. Free mulch will be available for self-loading from May 18 through Sept. 21. For large quantities of mulch, an end loader is available on Saturdays, 7 a.m.-4 p.m., charging \$5 for two cubic yards.

For more information visit www.bfslash.org or call Carolyn, 495-3127, Chuck, 495-8675, Jeff, 495-8024, or the county Environmental Division, 520-7878. Anyone wanting to volunteer to work a shift can do so via the website.

Transfer of developers' fees to school districts

At its March 21 meeting, the BOCC voted unanimously to approve the transfer of subdivision plan and plat fees to the appropriate county school districts. \$10,780 went to Lewis-Palmer School District 38, where the funds are to go toward the cost of installing HVAC systems at the elementary and high schools. Academy School District 20 received \$80,622 to accommodate enrollment trends and facility needs.

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