

concerns about her ability to make a clear and unbiased decision.

Kari Parsons, Planner III, Planning and Community Development, presented the proposed amendments to the commissioners, which include the addition of a sixth tract for stormwater detention, relocation of the detention ponds and proposed trails out of the wetland areas in response to neighbors' concerns, and the adjustment of lot lines. Planned culverts over the drainage way would be replaced by a bridge structure that would span the wetland area, and there would be adjustments to the retaining walls and the addition of a guardrail for safety on Mesa Drive.

Parsons explained that the applicant was also requesting permission to

perform pre-development site grading and was asking for a finding for water sufficiency for quality, quantity, and dependability. She said that if there was a finding for water sufficiency, then the applicant intended to request administrative approval of subsequent final plats. She said 28 neighboring property owners had been notified ahead of the public hearings.

The El Paso County Planning Commission heard the application at its Nov. 5 meeting and unanimously recommended it for approval. See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n12.htm#epcpc>. Some of the discussion at that meeting had addressed matters outside of the narrow scope of the amendments being considered. At the BOCC hearing,

Cole Emmons, senior assistant county attorney, first set out the criteria for approving the application and then said, "I want to give you some limiting instructions, both to you as well as to the audience. I've just read a long list of criteria as they relate to the PUD. Typically when we are in a zoning hearing, and in this case a PUD hearing, the board has a lot of discretion in considering the evidence and making its decision. At the zoning stage, that's usually an opportunity for the public to weigh in on the plan. I want to make it clear that today's hearing and the applications in front of you are limited in scope. This is for an amended PUD and we are only looking at the issues that Kari [Parsons] mentioned related to the renumbering of lots, the location of the tanks, those types of things. We are not here to rehash the density issues."

Andrea Barlow of NES Inc., representing Classic Homes, reiterated what Emmons had said, stating that the approved plan was not being revisited. She said, "The changes are very minimal and are actually improvements that will help the compatibility of this project with the site conditions."

She went on to say that such minor changes would normally have been dealt with at final plat stage but were being done as a preliminary plan amendment because the project had been under so much public scrutiny. Concerning the pre-development site grading, and specifically whether a permit was required, which was questioned at the Planning Commission hearing, she reiterated that the Army Corps of Engineers had stated that the grading work did not require a permit as long as access was via the existing road.

She told the commissioners that Mr. Irey, a neighboring property owner, had recently questioned the thoroughness of the public engagement process. She stated that there had been three public meetings, which was unusual as normally only one is held and even that is not required by county code. She also said that many neighbors had spoken at the original Planning Commission meeting, adding, "So there has been a thorough public process on this application, both originally and moving forward through this amendment."

The commissioners had no questions for staff or the applicant. No member of the public spoke in favor. Two spoke against. Judy von Ahlefeldt, a citizen who had also spoken at the

Planning Commission hearing, said, "I agree that all the 'I's' have been dotted and the 'T's' crossed for the regulation and code compliance and all that but I want to speak to some things that I don't think have been addressed." She voiced concerns about the Forest Service being notified about trail access while on furlough, wildfire risk, and the lack of any archaeological inspection of the site. During her testimony, Commissioner Mark Waller reminded her more than once to get to her comments on the modifications.

Von Ahlefeldt said, "Well I guess I'll just make the same statement that I made at the Planning Commission that I thought public hearings were for the public to bring all concerns." She ended by saying, "I already said I agreed with all of the compliance with the regulations. The problem is we don't have enough regulations. There are things that are simply not covered. That's why we are doing a county master plan and what I see happening here is two things: Nero is fiddling while Rome burns and the other is the fable of the emperor's clothing."

Carol Johnson, a neighbor who also commented at the Planning Commission hearing, then raised wildfire concerns. When asked to get to the modifications, she said, "That's fine. So how do we as citizens help you go on from here and not make the mistakes you're making? How do we do this?" When the discussion returned to the dais, Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez Jr. said providing public input into the master plan process would be the appropriate way forward.

Doug Stimple, CEO of Classic Homes, spoke to express his frustration at the opposition to the application and particularly a last-minute communication from Mr. Irey, a neighboring property owner. He said, "I have to tell you I think Mr. Irey has defamed Ms. Parsons. I think it's outrageous and he's tap dancing with a defamation suit from us. So, if Mr. Irey wants to get attorneys involved, we'll see, but our plan was approved in April. These are insignificant modifications that do a better job of protecting the natural environment which contains almost 500 acres of open space and mouse habitat and we request your approval."

Commissioner Waller said, "We need to engage in the land use planning process in a responsible manner, and I think that that's what we try to do as a board every single time we have one of these sorts of development plans come before us. And I tell you it's particularly disheartening to me and quite frankly irritating to me and I can tell you it will never be persuasive to me to have folks like Mr. Irey threatening personal suit against me and my colleagues if we don't do what he wants us to do." He continued, "It's not about doing what Mr. Irey wants to have done. And it's not about being afraid to do one thing or another. For me, it's about doing what's right. It's about trying to make our community grow in a responsible manner."

Commissioner Holly Williams said, "I believe that this development has been done very well and I think it will match. It's very nice. It leaves the big knoll in the center of the development there as open space and I am going to be in favor of this."

The commissioners voted unanimously to approve the amendments with a finding for water sufficiency. All the documents and correspondence relating to the application can be viewed on the county's EDARP system. See <https://epcdevplanreview.com/Public/ProjectDetails/153945>.

Victoria Rae (McEvers) Gascho



Victoria Rae (McEvers) Gascho

Victoria Rae (McEvers) Gascho, 73, of Monument, Colorado passed away at home surrounded by family on November 25, 2019. She valiantly battled cancer for over four years. Born and raised in Grayling, Michigan, Vicki became a follower of Jesus early in life, committing herself to a life of Christian service.

At Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, she met Dick Gascho. They married in Fairview, MI in 1967 and were soon blessed with three sons.

In 1972 and for the next 13 years, they served Trinity Baptist Church in Alma, Michigan. Moving to Graz, Austria in 1985, they joined the work of Greater Europe Mission and eventually located to Luxembourg. For the last 21 years, She has called Monument, Colorado home.

A life-long learner, Vicki earned a PhD in Education from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. She invested her gifting in Greater Europe Mission as well as holding the role of Senior Consultant for Curriculum Development with Development Associates International. At DAI, Vicki's work took her to India, Egypt and elsewhere in Asia and Africa. She was also an adjunct faculty member at Trinity International University, Deerfield, Illinois.

Vicki was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, friend and mentor. She will be missed by many. Vicki is survived by her husband Dick, sons Rick (Christy), Andy (Vicki), Adam (Bethel) and grandchildren Rich, Megan, Josiah, Rebecca, Jacob, Mariah, Jeremiah, Ty, Micah, and Kael. She was preceded in death by her parents, Roy and Gladys McEvers, and siblings Ted (Jennie), Jerry (Shirley) and Louanne (Bob).

A memorial service is planned for January 31, 2020, to be held at 6:30 pm at Woodmen Valley Chapel, 290 E. Woodmen Road, Colorado Springs, 80919. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Greater Europe Mission (P.O. Box 1669, Monument, CO 80132-1669), Development Associates International (13710 Struthers Rd, Suite 120, Colorado Springs, CO 80921), or Compassion International (Colorado Springs, CO 80997).

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