

the county about open space and just because this area has been used as open space, it still did belong to someone." Referring to the rapid growth being experienced in this part of the county and to the overcrowding at the nearby middle school, she said the school district needed to find a way to deal with it, stating, "We cannot take a person's property right away because of overcrowding in a school district." She concluded, "I think it is a very well-planned development with the property owner having balanced around the ecological needs of the property which is why I would move that we approve this subdivision."

When submitting the rezoning application, the applicant also requested administrative approval for the final plat, meaning there would be no public hearings. Now that BOCC has approved the PUD as a preliminary plan, this final plat approval can move forward.

**COVID-19 response**

The commissioners have continued to receive updates on the COVID-19 situation. At the April 28 meeting, Nikki Simmons, county controller, Financial Services, presented to the commissioners the county's share of funding received from the federal government under the CARES Act. She said that Colorado had received \$2.23 billion, of which El Paso County had been allocated \$125.704 million. She set out the specific areas for which the funding could and could not be used. For example, it can be used to meet new expenses made necessary by the public health emergency but cannot be used to offset lost tax revenues. She stressed that any funds not used by Dec. 30, 2020 must be returned. El Paso County is sharing its funding allocation with local municipalities that were not large enough to apply directly for funding themselves. The county will keep 55% of the funding, with the remaining 45% being distributed among the municipalities based on their population size.

During public comments, as part of BOCC meetings, individuals have been asking the commissioners to do all they can to reopen the county's economy. At the April 30 meeting, members of the public addressed the commissioners for about two hours.

At the May 5 meeting, the commissioners approved a resolution endorsing a variance request under the Stay at Home order to provide for in-person

high school graduation ceremonies with restrictions. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) approved the variance on May 14. Graduation ceremonies will be student-only with the ceremonies streamed live. Palmer Ridge High School's graduation ceremony will take place on June 11 at 9 a.m. with the Lewis-Palmer High School ceremony being held on June 12 at noon. Academy School District 20 graduation ceremonies are scheduled to take place during the week beginning June 22.

The commissioners voted to approve a second variance request at their May 14 meeting, this one requesting the limited reopening of in-person dining at restaurants in the county with safety precautions. The request was approved by CDPHE on May 23.

Two further variances were approved at the May 28 meeting, one relating to reopening places of worship and the other to a phased reopening of Cheyenne Mountain Zoo. Both variances will require state approval.

The BOCC chair, Commissioner Mark Waller, said, "Spiritual and mental health is a critical factor to our region's response, recovery, and resiliency to COVID-19." He added, "We will continue our work on variances to get our county open for worship, business, and recreation."

**Monument Academy Charter School development agreement**

At its May 12 meeting, the BOCC approved a request by the Monument Academy Foundation to enable the development of the new charter school on a 42.32-acre site at the southeast corner of the intersection of Highway 83 and Walker Road.

The BOCC's approval authorizes the signing of a development agreement between county and the foundation. The agreement sets out the requirements for permitting, financial assurance, and construction of public improvements for the new school. It includes provisions specific to roadway maintenance, requirements for any temporary access during construction, and the payments of county's road impact fee. The associated site development plan requires only administrative approval.

**Curtis minor subdivision request**

At their April 28 meeting, the commissioners voted

unanimously to approve a minor subdivision request by the Curtis Family Living Trust for a property at the intersection of Roller Coaster Road and Baptist Road. The application was heard at the El Paso County Planning Commission meeting on April 7 and came to the BOCC hearing with its recommendation for approval. See [https://www.ocn.me/v20n5.htm?zoom\\_highlight=curtis](https://www.ocn.me/v20n5.htm?zoom_highlight=curtis).

The minor subdivision, to be known as Curtis Subdivision Filing No.1, will create two single-family lots from the 36.65-acre property that is zoned RR-5 (residential rural). Lot 1 will be 25 acres and Lot 2 about 8 acres. A total of 4.10 acres is being dedicated as public right-of-way for the future realignment of Roller Coaster Road.

The applicant was granted a deviation allowing driveway access for the second lot onto Baptist Road, an arterial road, instead of Roller Coaster Road. Normally access is not allowed onto an arterial roadway, but the request was granted because of safety concerns with access via Roller Coaster Road due to a large curve near the property that would cause a dangerous blind spot.

The application was heard as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion.

**Other decisions**

- May 5—The commissioners approved the adoption of the 2015 International Fire Code for the Black Forest Fire/ Rescue Protection District and the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District. The two districts worked together to draft the resolution to enable the BOCC to approve the code.
- May 5—Approved the partial release of a check for \$72,156 for subdivision improvements at Monument Hill Business Park following the completion of 60% of the improvements and their satisfactory inspection.
- May 14—Approved the issuance of three ambulance permits to the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District. The one-year permits run until April 30, 2021.

Helen Walklett can be reached at [helenwalklett@ocn.me](mailto:helenwalklett@ocn.me).

**Homeowners save nearly 100 acres of open space**



**Above:** This is the new South Woodmoor Preserve, where 94 acres will remain open in perpetuity, and 38 acres west of Cloverleaf Road will be developed by ProTerra. **Below:** The Walters Open Space Committee members are, from left, Bev Kimmel-Sullivan, Rich Lamb (treasurer), Ray Sullivan (vice director), Nancy Eldred, John Cona, Tish Norman (director), Randy Viera, Sandy Lamb (secretary), Angie Curry, Tom Snyder, and John Dumond. Photo courtesy of WOSC LLC. Photos courtesy of WOSC LLC.



By Angie Curry, WOSC LLC Membership and Communications Chair After a single post on social media that undeveloped land in the middle of the South Woodmoor neighbor-

hood had been put up for sale, many were surprised and unnerved at the uncertainty of what might lie ahead. A determined few organized a neighborhood meeting in September 2018, and now, after an un-

precedented effort, a majority of the land will be preserved as open space named the South Woodmoor Preserve.

The subject land is about 133 acres. The space winds through South Woodmoor like a golf course, because that was the plan put forth more than 25 years ago by then owner and developer Vernon Walters. After realizing a golf course would not be profitable, he abandoned that idea and owned it until his passing. After that, several family members owned and maintained the land. In May 2018, they opted to sell.

South Woodmoor homeowners Tish Norman and Chris Williams formed and led the Walters Open Space Committee (WOSC). Many residents have served on this committee the past 20 months, often meeting weekly to brainstorm, strategize, and plan

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