

the housing program reduced by \$1 million to \$2 million. Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez Jr. was eager to make it clear that the county was not eliminating or reducing funding to programs that it had already run but rather these are new additions to the proposed budget and that \$2 million was still being provided that had not been previously allocated. The sheriff's office had also signalled that it no longer needed \$400,000 for critical needs. A part of this sum went to meet an increase in the county's contract with the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region, leaving \$275,000 to be allocated elsewhere.

The budget is now scheduled to be adopted at the Dec. 7 BOCC meeting.

WMMI variance of use

At the Nov. 16 BOCC land use meeting, the commissioners unanimously approved a request for a variance of use by the WMMI. The variance allows the North Gate Boulevard property to continue to hold a range of events outside of its core museum functions which are an important source of revenue to the museum, and which previously were held in violation of its RR-5 (rural residential) zoning. The events include outdoor concerts, seasonal festivals, and a farmers' market.

County staff was made aware in 2019 that events were being held at the property that were unrelated to museum activities and not allowed uses under its RR-5 zoning after traffic issues arose with one such event. At the time, Grant Dewey, executive director of the WMMI, told staff he believed the museum had an exemption to hold events and that it had been doing so for over a decade.

As a variance of use application was not filed in 2019 to resolve the matter and the events continued after a notice violation, Craig Dossey, executive director of planning and community development, made an executive determination authorizing litigation against the museum in June 2020. In August 2020, the museum appealed the executive director's decision

to the BOCC which denied the appeal but agreed to stay litigation to allow the museum to pursue a recently filed variance of use application. At the Dec. 1, 2020, BOCC meeting the commissioners voted again to stay litigation to allow the museum further time to advance the variance of use application. Several temporary use permits were issued to allow the museum to continue to host events while completing the application. See https://www.ocn.me/v20n9.htm?zoom_highlight=%22grant+dewey%22 and https://www.ocn.me/v21n1.htm?zoom_highlight=%22western+museum+of+mining%22

At the Nov. 16 meeting, Dewey stressed the importance of revenue raised from the events held at the property. He said, "To give you a little more detail about some of those revenue streams, where they come from, you can see that the more traditional museum type activities and tours are a fairly small percentage as compared to our potential for rental revenue and our gift shop and our community events so the overall package makes us much more sustainable to have multiple revenues and also really allows us to reach 100% of financial sustainability so we're excited to have the potential to do that."

Dewey said the museum would lose 20 to 30 percent of its revenue if the variance were not allowed. The applicant's letter of intent stated that it would not be able to continue to operate without that revenue.

The application came to the BOCC from the planning commission with a recommendation for approval. At that meeting, Dewey had asked if the need for a site development plan could be waived. Nina Ruiz, planning manager, Planning and Community Development, told the BOCC it could not do that, but it could choose to waive the site development plan fee of \$2,837. No decision was taken on that.

The vote to approve the variance of use was unanimous. Commissioner Stan VanderWerf said, "Congratulations to the mining museum and we look forward to the continued great work that takes place with you there."

Tri-Lakes Cares/Crossfire Ministries Community Investment grant update

At the Nov. 9 meeting, Tri-Lakes Cares and Crossfire Ministries updated the commissioners on work the two nonprofits had collaborated on with the grant money they received from the BOCC under the Community Investment Program. Haley Chapin, executive director, Tri-Lakes Cares, said that the collaboration had helped ensure that those across the county who were struggling, particularly through the pandemic, were served. John Green, director of development, Tri-Lakes Cares, said 840 individuals had been supported multiple times via food distribution, maintained housing, utilities assistance, transportation help, or medical assistance in 2020-21. Renee Beebe, executive director, Crossfire Ministries, said her organization had been able to help 15,630 individuals. Each non-profit received \$12,500 in grant funding. The partners are applying again for funding from this program and this time they are asking for funding of \$25,000 each.

Other decisions

- Nov. 2 - the commissioners voted to approve the preliminary release of a bond for \$2,687,135 for the Forest Lakes Filing No. 5 following the completion and inspection of public improvements at the subdivision.
- Nov. 9 - approved the preliminary release of a check for \$31,249 following the completion and inspection of all subdivision improvements at the Settlers Ranch 2B Filing development. The commissioners also approved the acceptance of certain streets at the Forest Lakes Filing No.5 and the Jackson Ranch Filing No.4 subdivisions into the county road maintenance system.
- Nov. 16 - voted to appoint Christopher Whitney to the planning commission as an associate member. His term runs for one year.

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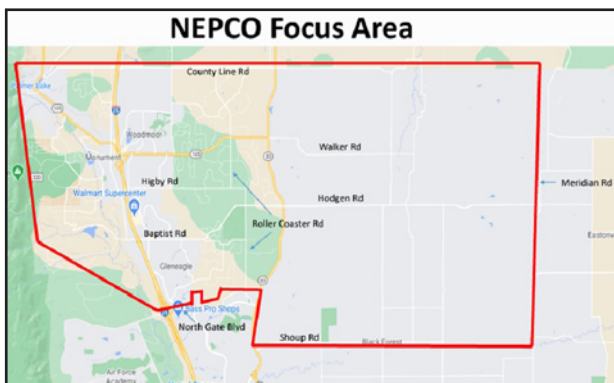
Northern El Paso County Homeowners Associations (NEPCO), Nov. 13th

NEPCO holds board elections, hosts county commissioners

By Marlene Brown

The Northern El Paso County Homeowners Association (NEPCO) General Membership bi-monthly meetings for September and November were held at the Woodmoor Barn located at the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) on Woodmoor Dr. The in-person meetings have been suspended at Monument Town Hall due to COVID-19 and will continue to be held at the Woodmoor Barn for the foreseeable future.

NEPCO has been around 20 years with the original intent to bring about communication among its members. More than 50 Homeowner Associations (HOAs) in Northern El Paso County (see map of Focus Area) serve as point of contact facilitating information regarding state, county, and local government issues in planned land use management in the Focus Area.



Board elections held

Board elections were held, as a quorum was present, with more than 25 HOAs represented at the meeting. Greg Lynd's term as president has expired and he will not seek re-election. Secretary Bob Swedenburg and Member-at-Large Tim Miller's terms have also expired. They will be nominated for re-election. Two open slots on the board need to be filled. That means four of the seven positions on the board are up for election. Nominees include Swedenburg, Gleneagle North HOA; Tim Miller, Tall Pines Ranch HOA; Dave Betzler, Red Rock Ranch HOA; and Gerry Shaw, Ridge at Fox Run HOA. Swedenburg asked for nominees from the floor and there weren't any. He then asked for a show of hands for the four nominees and the vote was unanimous. Beginning Dec. 1, 2021, the newly elected members, Swedenburg, Miller, Betzler and Shaw, will serve for two-year terms. Positions

will be determined at the December NEPCO board meeting.

Improved notification of HOAs sought

John Lewis, chairman of the Transportation and Land Use Committee, reports that with over 75 land development requests in the NEPCO Focus Area in the last two years, he has been working on a new operating model to engage and notify impacted HOAs. Lewis has been collecting Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data and center-point addresses for each HOA. He is working to assist the HOAs with coordination of responses to the county regarding new developments.

Ember Ignition presentation

Matthew Nelson, chairman of the Wildfire Preparedness Committee, gave an *Ember Ignition* presentation. As a reminder, Nelson stated, "Majority of homes lost in a wildfire event are lost due to ember ignition." He continued to explain that structure hardening can prevent ember ignition. He recommended you keep flammable materials away from your home or under your deck. Remove needles and leaves from your roof and create a five-foot fuel-free zone around your house, including removing wooden fences and gates attached to the house, he said. You can contact Matthew Nelson at the Woodmoor Improvement Association for more information.

County commissioners speak to NEPCO

El Paso County Commissioners Holly Williams and

Stan VanderWerf spoke next about county budget and expenditures including, but not limited to, infrastructure, the court system and jail, and public safety and health. Infrastructure projects being done in the NEPCO Focus Area include Monument Hill American Disabilities Act work, the I-25 Gap Project, Highway 105, and Beacon Lite Rd. These are just a few of the projects paid for and overseen by the county. There is a backlog of over 1,100 miles of lanes in the county that will not get maintained or repaired this budget fiscal year. Increased cost of materials, supply chain bottlenecks, and unfunded mandates from the state level will slow down progress. For more information contact Holly Williams at hollywilliams@elpasoco.com or Stan VanderWerf at stanvanderwerf@elpasoco.com.

The meeting ran overtime and there were many more questions for the commissioners. It was requested that they come back soon to discuss the issues that concern their constituents. Both Williams and VanderWerf are known to respond to emails and are open to discuss county issues.

The next NEPCO meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. at the Woodmoor Barn. For information regarding NEPCO go to nepco.org.

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Woodmoor Improvement Association, Nov. 17

Board raises dues, fines, and fees

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) met on Nov.17 to vote on a budget that increases the annual dues, approve a new fine schedule, and increase Barn rental fees.

Annual dues to increase

Board President Brian Bush reported that the board has been working on the 2022 budget for WIA and it is in parity between income and expenses. The budget includes an increase in the annual dues from \$267 to \$275 per year, or just under the maximum of 3 percent. The board unanimously approved the budget which can be seen online at <https://woodmoor.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2022-Approved-Bud->

get.pdf.

Fine schedule updated

Vice President Peter Bille brought a finalized fine schedule to the board that more clearly and consistently specifies the violations around fireworks, pyrotechnics, and open fires. Fines start at \$5,000 and can increase up to any amount at the board's discretion due to threat to life and property. If warranted, serious cases may be forwarded to the El Paso County Fire Marshal for prosecution.

The board unanimously approved the new schedule. It's posted on the website at <https://woodmoor.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/11.17.21-Approve-Fine-Schedule.pdf>