

Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations, July 9

Pros and cons of HOA management companies discussed

By Marlene Brown

The Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) held its general membership bi-monthly meeting July 9. Twenty-three-member homeowners associations (HOA) were represented by interested members of HOAs in the Tri-Lakes and Black Forest areas and 24 member HOAs were absent, so a quorum was not present.

NEPCO President Mike Aspenson reiterated the need for volunteer members to join the board. The position of secretary is vacant, and Bob Swedenburg, vice president, has been filling the duties of the secretary, including the recording of the minutes and distributing them to member HOAs. He asked the HOA members to send the minutes to their membership for review and information as to what NEPCO is all about.

Aspenson also explained there is an open position for chairman of the Transportation and Land Use Committee, and a volunteer is needed to represent NEPCO at the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG).

Swedenburg gave his vice-president report, which included an update to two House bills that Rep. Terri Carver had provided from the meeting of May 14. HB22-1139 states that HOAs cannot regulate the use of public right-of-way, basically meaning that HOAs cannot enforce covenants that prohibit overnight parking on county roads. HB22-1387 Common Interest Communities Reserve Funds that imposes specific requirements was vetoed by Gov. Polis on May 27.

Jim Keefe gave the treasurer's report, saying all members have paid their dues for 2022 except for three HOAs.

Membership Director Larry Oliver reported that NEPCO has 47 active-member HOAs that include over 10,000 homes and lots. He welcomed West Oak Ridge HOA to NEPCO as a new member.

Community Outreach Committee Chairman Dave Betzler stated that he has been working on the list of external organizations that NEPCO will collaborate with

for various activities. He has applied for a grant for a NEPCO laptop. Mission and messaging efforts are being developed.

Beth Lonnquist of the Red Rock Ranch Homeowners Association and the new chair of the Wildfire Preparedness Committee presented a PowerPoint on wildfire preparedness. She described how to put together a "go bag" for fire evacuation. More information can be found about the go bag at <http://elpasoready.org/diy-emergency-kit>. Everyone should have a go bag with 72 hours' worth of essential supplies, she said. She also explained how an HOA can become a Firewise community and possibly receive insurance discounts. For more information, go to www.nepco.org to find her presentation in the meetings section.

Aspenson stated that although there is not a current Transportation and Land Use Committee (TLUC), the NEPCO board has agreed, with Aspenson's leadership, to work with the Town of Monument regarding a new development and help to facilitate neighborhood meetings regarding a proposed Caliber Development of 264 high-end multi-family units—20 buildings on 15 acres just south of Palmer Ridge High School off of Monument Hill Road. NEPCO members interested in volunteering to be a member of TLUC should email Aspenson at president@nepco.org.

Guest speakers

Tim Miller was introduced as the moderator of the guest panel to discuss the pros and cons of HOA management companies. He in turn introduced Harold Larsen, president of the Heights Property Owners Association, Brandon Helms of the Warren Management Co., and Bryce Meighan, an HOA attorney with Anderson, Dude and Lebel P.C.

Helms spoke first about five pros of using HOA management companies:

1. Resources—they have the information to do the job.
2. Experience—they work with homeowners and are

problem-solvers.

3. Relationships—they have a network of contractors and agencies.
4. Compliance - they understand and can ensure that an HOA is compliant with laws at the state and local level.
5. They can minimize liability with a basis of knowledge to protect the HOA.

Miller is a resident of Tall Pines Ranch HOA, which is composed of 51 lots on 2½ acres. He also is on the NEPCO board. The HOA interviewed and worked with several management companies before a member's wife formed a company to take care of all the daily management duties.

Harold Larson, president of Heights Property Owners Association (POA), which is composed of 54 homes on 26 acres in the Woodmoor area, spoke of problems and issues that their HOA had being a self-managed HOA. There were so many problems that they discussed disbanding the HOA. The board sought help from the Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA). They were able to rework the rules and regulations and get people to serve on the board. WIA agreed to manage Heights POA for a fee and is serving as its management company.

Bryce Meighan, HOA attorney, made several observations regarding use of HOA management companies. Generally, there is less risk of a lawsuit. Fewer mistakes are made in recordkeeping. Self-managed boards tend to perpetuate the same mistakes year after year. Basically, the management company keeps the board in compliance and forces it to follow the law and its HOA governing documents.

The next NEPCO meeting is scheduled for Sept. 10 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. For more information regarding NEPCO, visit www.nepco.org

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Woodmoor Improvement Association, July 20

Board hears resident concerns about open space improvements

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board met on July 20 to hear a resident's concerns about planned improvements to the newly donated South Woodmoor Preserve (SWP) open space and to hear board highlights. Board member Cindy Thrush was absent.

South Woodmoor Preserve improvements questioned

South Woodmoor resident Jennifer Davis spoke about her concerns with improvements planned by WIA for the new SWP open space.

The nearly 65-acre open space donated by WOSC LLC, a group of 118 homeowners surrounding the area, was formerly known as the Walters property. Members of WOSC LLC each purchased a portion of the property to extend their lots, Proterra Properties purchased 38 acres for development, and the remaining acres were donated and formally accepted by WIA at its June board meeting. As part of the donation, WIA agreed to improve and maintain SWP as it does with its existing open spaces. President Brian Bush has referred to SWP as the last bit of open space likely to remain undeveloped in northern El Paso County and said it represents an opportunity WIA has long wished for to do more for residents in South Woodmoor. Like all open spaces in Woodmoor, WIA cannot prevent public usage due to its nonprofit status.

Davis, a 14-year resident, provided information on her and her husband's background, noting their membership in WOSC. She spoke about some issues with the raptor poles installed by WOSC after obtaining approval from WIA, saying WOSC had not consulted with its members as its bylaws require. The wind permanently bent one raptor pole that Davis could see outside her window, and she asked that it be removed rather than repaired or replaced. Raptor poles were recommended to WOSC by the county wildlife district manager as a more natural, cost-effective way to control the prairie dog population. In the past, Davis said, residents paid about \$35 for extermination services.

Davis said improvements such as benches, dog waste stations, and putting down road base for trails would be rolling out the red carpet and inviting riffraff to come. Davis said WIA would also have to install bear-proof trash cans, turning the area into a carnival. She provided a packet of documentation, including WOSC newsletters, excerpts from WIA documents, photos of raptor poles, and photos of a male walking a dog in SWP, whom she characterized as a "crack smoker" lingering

in the area. She also said it was too late when Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) responded, and WPS had four-wheeled through dry grass, which WIA had not yet mowed.

Bush noted that WIA was not privy to, nor could it deal with, issues related to Davis' relationship with WOSC. He said WIA had made commitments to improve SWP and could provide copies of the donation agreement. Bush said WIA manages over 100 acres of open space and believes benches, dog waste stations, and trails accrue for its residents' benefit. Although visitors could misuse amenities, he said, WIA tries not to punish the many for the sins of the few but will deal with any issues that arise.

Bush said now that WIA owns SWP, it will remedy or remove any damaged items in the common area. He said WIA will manage this open area in smart ways that don't harm the environment or unduly interfere with residents. Bush invited Davis to visit other WIA common areas to see the type of dirt trails installed and suggested she stay connected with the board.

Brad Gleason, WIA public safety director, noted SWP's limited access and suggested residents call WPS or the county Sheriff's Office if the response is slow. He encouraged residents to provide as much information as possible, including house numbers, to help locate any persons of concern. He believes WPS has a great team of officers that keep Woodmoor safe compared to other communities.

Board highlights

- WIA Covenants and Forestry Administrator Justin Gates provided the covenants report for Thrush, saying that of 50 items, there were 27 issues resolved via friendly communications, 13 unfounded complaints, and 10 violations in addition to 24 HOA checks that occur during a home sale. Recent fireworks violations were determined to be founded and resulted in fines of \$5,000 and \$2,500, respectively, as fireworks are always illegal in Woodmoor.
- Bush requested that the staff send letters to residents with tall grass due to higher than usual rainfall to stay ahead of the curve, as it will become a fire hazard when it dries. He noted residents, not the county, are responsible for grass up to the edge of the road.
- Gleason said WIA sent its road condition survey to the county so it could prioritize road repairs.
- Gleason noted many recreational vehicles, trailers, and campers in resident parking spots. Gleason

said those storing vehicles for more than 72 hours would receive a letter from WIA regarding the covenant violation.

- Bush commended WPS for handling a situation where an out-of-state visitor, a law enforcement officer, drove their car up to a picnic table in one of WIA's open spaces.
- Forestry Director Ed Miller reported on a partial extension of the wildfire mitigation grant, additional reimbursement checks, and a successful chipping day that processed 175 cubic yards of slash. Resident dues and requested non-resident donations of \$5 help to cover the cost. WIA held its final chipping days over the weekend of July 30-31.
- Bob Pearsall, the commons area administrator, updated the board on the newly completed WIA office front porch, noxious weed contracting, and dead tree removal. He noted the installation of additional dog waste stations and feedback from the mower that the need to clean mower blades decreased.
- Bush asked staff for an overview of the state of the condition of the newly donated SWP land so WIA could track that it is complying with its commitments.

The WIA Board of Directors usually meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the Barn at 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. The next meeting will be on Aug. 24.

See the WIA calendar at www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/ once approved and posted.

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