

Manning also discussed the possibility of a regional trail map being provided with packets and proposals, as well as the MPC being alerted if a trail somehow relates to a project.

Another conversation cen-

tered on the signs Monument puts up to announce the coming of new developments. Glover and Gwisdalla both thought these signs need to be much bigger and more obvious so citizens can be aware of developments and come

to MPC meetings discussing them if they're interested. Manning said they would look into these suggestions.

Also, the town planners are still working on summarizing the MPC's opinions on the landscape

ordinance in order to get them formally to the board.

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The next Monument Planning Commission meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 12 at 645 Beacon Lite Rd. Meetings

are normally held on the second Wednesday of the month. Information: 884-8017 or <http://www.townofmonument.org/meetings/> *Kate Pangelinan can be reached at [katepangelinan@ocn.me](mailto:katepangelinan@ocn.me).*

Monument Board of Trustees, Sept. 19

# Water tap fees increased; lessons on water 2A fund

By Lisa Hatfield

On Sept. 19, the Monument Board of Trustees approved an increase in water tap fees paid for providing water infrastructure to new development in the town's water service area west of I-25. The town's water attorney defined what "new" meant as the trustees learned about water law and potential legal uses of the 2A Fund for "new" water storage,

delivery and acquisition. And Jamie Fenley was appointed to the Board of Adjustment in a divided vote.

Trustees Greg Coopman and Kelly Elliott were excused.

### Tap fees jump with consensus from stakeholders

The trustees unanimously approved an ordinance noticeably

increasing the price developers will pay for access to potable water within the town of Monument water service area west of I-25.

Town Manager Chris Lowe and Public Works Director Tom Tharnish presented the ordinance, explaining that the proposed impact fee schedules had been reviewed extensively over the last nine months with input from the stakeholders such as the Home Builders Association (HBA) members and the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development

Corp. (EDC), who wrote letters of support for the increase.

Higher tap fees will provide revenue to support the new capital improvements needed for new housing and commercial development. The impact fee will jump in 2016 and then increase 9 percent a year for six years. Tharnish, Lowe, and Will Koger of Forsgren Associates said the new tap fees are "close to the middle" compared to rates and fees of neighboring communities, and town staff will review them annually.

For example, tap fees increased 66 percent for access to a new three-quarter-inch tap, the average size of a residential water pipe, going from \$9,000 to \$15,000 in 2016.

### 2A fund and water definitions

The town's water attorney, Bob Krassa of Krassa & Miller LLC, answered trustees' questions for an hour to help them understand more about water law and some definitions regarding aspects of the town's 2A Water Storage, Acquisition and Delivery (ASD) Fund. See related Sept. 6 Monument Board of Trustees article on page 7.

Since 2005, a voter-approved 1-percent water sales tax has been paying both for the new Town Hall and specifically for "new water acquisition, storage and delivery." Starting in 2017, 100 percent of this revenue will go into the 2A fund, and many of the trustees wanted to know what actually constitutes "new water acquisition, storage, and delivery," since the 2A Fund has

\$2 million in it.

Krassa's comments related to the 2A fund included:

- He thought 2A funds could be used to build a new water storage tank, new water treatment plant, or new delivery infrastructure, to drill a new well, or to buy new water rights.
  - 2A funds could not be used to replace current infrastructure, do maintenance, or to re-drill an existing well.
  - A "water right" is the right to take water out of a natural stream or the ground. Water rights are conveyed by deeds in a decree in water court.
  - In Colorado, you don't really own the actual molecules of water ("wet water"), but through water rights ("paper water"), you have a right to use a specified amount.
  - Monument produces the vast majority of its water from the aquifers under the town, which are part of the Denver Basin, whose four aquifers are being depleted.
  - Water is available if you are willing to pay market price for water rights. Recent examples: Aurora, Colorado Springs, and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District.
- Krassa said there is no such thing as a dumb question on water rights, because even if you have asked it before, the answer might be different because of a different context. Other information he shared included:
- Ninety percent of water used in homes is only used once and then goes to the wastewater plant and is discharged for downstream use by others.
  - The town has water rights in

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