some suggestions to alleviate parents’ concerns. She suggested adding two additional colors, voted on by students, for middle school students with clear guidelines. She felt that teachers were not as concerned that the shoes matched the shoes and that changing that policy would address 70 percent of the complaints. She also expressed concern about bobbles but felt it was a financial burden to parents who just purchased items in January to now have to buy a $20 jacket along with $200 in fees and the cost of school supplies. She suggested grandfathering the requirement until the 2019 school year and confiscating sweatshirts for a quarter if students are caught with phones or vapes.

Finally, a parent agreed that shoes were his biggest concern, and changing the policy to read “most days” and, if black, etc. would help. He was concerned that his kid’s need for wide shoes might increase his costs or leave his child with ill-fitting shoes. He asked what the new rules were trying to accomplish and if the board felt that they were working. He also asked about the right place to have a dialogue about his concerns. The board suggested he speak to the dean and then to the principal. It was noted that the dean suggested they come to the board meeting. The board said that there had been an extensive process to get a lot of input and collective decisions and solutions, and that a number of stakeholders had been involved. The purpose of comments at this board meeting was to provide feedback and board members agreed to circle back with the administration to discuss this issue. This parent noted that there were a lot of kids that parents did not know changes were being considered for the uniform policy. He reiterated his concerns that the new policies might not solve the problem—that kids could have phones or vape pens in pockets or so.

Phasing out of National Junior Honor Society opposed

Three parents spoke about phasing out of the National Junior Honor Society, explaining that NHS was a better fit for their kids, that the scheduling conflicts could have been avoided, and that parent volunteers might be able to pitch in to continue the program.

Other highlights

The following items were highlighted at the board meeting:

- Principal Elizabeth Davis highlighted the positive results of the anonymous, third party Teaching and Learning Conditions Colorado Report administered by the Office of the State Department of Education. Respondents would recommend MA as a good place to work (90 percent) and as a good place for students to learn (100 percent). More information can be seen at http://bit.ly/2a-hctcB.
- The board unanimously approved the Letter of Intent from Inline Management to be the builders representative for the construction of the new high school. Director Don Griffin knows Kurt Connelly from Inline Management, Mark Dichter said he well and says Connelly makes MA’s bond counsel extremely confident of the numbers. Costs are still being negotiated.
- The board voted to approve CRP Architectural and its principle, Brian Risely, as the architect of record for the new high school. Griffin noted that Risely is the architect for 3D8’s new schools and that Risely has been involved with the proposed property for 10 years and is very pro-MA.
- Teachers representatives Tiffany Alexander and Kelly Beard were recognized with certificates for their attendance and advocacy at the board meetings. Board member Mark McWilliams reported that the board self-assessment shows that the board works well together and is unified in support of MA’s mission.
- Board elections were held on May 14 and 15 with three candidates vying for two open seats. A candidate’s forum was held ahead of the May 10 meeting. Melanie Stroup and Dwayne Cooke have been elected and will be given the Oath of Office at the June 21 board meeting and begin their three-year terms on July 1.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, June 21 at the Monument Academy library at 1150 Village Ridge Point. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Information about the MA School Board, including meeting minutes, committee and financials can be found at http://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board.

For more information, contact Jackie Burbank at jackieburbank@ocn.me.

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, May 1, 8, 15, 17, and 22

Commissioners urged to oppose “urban” development density at Forest Lakes

By Helen Walklett

A resident urged the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) at its May 15 meeting to vote against a proposed development at Forest Lakes when it comes before the board. The commissioners also approved a rezoning and subdivision request for a Wakonda Hills property during May. Other decisions made related to current development at Forest Lakes, appointments to the El Paso County Planning Commission, and the Highway 105 Improvement Project.

Forest Lakes development

Speaking during the public comments session of the May 15 BOCC meeting, local resident Ami Lennon urged the commissioners to vote against an upcoming proposal for further development at Forest Lakes. Lennon said, “I would like to ask the commissioners to vote against the proposal that Classic Homes will be requesting in the near future to put an additional 18 homes, for a total of 199 homes, in Forest Lakes at the base of the foothills. This may not seem like a lot of homes compared to Flying Horse, but putting 199 more acres in this sub-area is setting a precedent and it would be essentially disregarding the Twin-Valley land use and master plan that was created.” The Twin-Valley is a sub-area of the Tri-Lakes Planning Area. “The Valley is a sub-area of the Tri-Lakes Planning Area. ‘That concerned a lot of us.’ ”

She explained that the 2000 update of the Twin-Valley land use plan states that the sub-area should remain primarily rural residential with lot sizes averaging 5 acres and large clustering options using minimum 2.5-acre lots being considered only if there is strict adherence to this overall density approach.

Lennon ended by saying, “I believe the proposed “Forest Lakes to be” plan does not coincide with the public health, safety, and general welfare in El Paso County. Who’s liable for the deaths that result from a fire when two roads that lead out of that development go in the same direction? I live on that mesa top, and that road is so steep that when the weather goes bad, I can’t get out one way in.”

In response, Commissioner Darryl Glenn explained that the planning commission could not make a decision at this comment. He stated, “We actually have to hear it as an advisory board and we will be making a recommendation for approval.”

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El Paso County has recently revamped its website. See https://planningdevelopmentelpsocom.figaro.com/elpaso-county-planning-commission/planning-commission-2018-updates/ and then https://hcc.ok.gov for county commissioner meeting information.

Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me

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