

Synopsis of NEPCO General Membership Meeting, 11 March 2023

This synopsis is intended to provide the highlights of the NEPCO General Membership meeting to all residents of NEPCO member Homeowner Associations. Full minutes & presentations at www.nepco.org.

Wildfire Preparedness Update:

Highlights included: discussion on Income 65 bill that can provide tax credit to homeowners; reminder that preparedness must be a priority for all homeowners; and note that ember fires pose a clear and deadly threat to homes in wildland-urban interface/WUI.

Transportation and Land Use (TLUC):

Three development projects were highlighted on NEPCO's area of interest map.

Hay Creek (south of Forest Lakes, west side of I-25/Baptist Road) is zoned appropriately and has been county-approved, and is not a NEPCO concern.

Terra Ridge (east of Black Forest Road, south of Hogden Road) is not in NEPCO borders. Its rezoning was approved last summer. The concern is that Terra Ridge project and Flying Horse North are only separated by Black Forest Road—just a further indication of higher density housing in that area.

Flying Horse North Sketch Plan has recently been approved. Issues that can impact NEPCO member HOAs include: roads (Hogden widening, accesses; Black Forest Road widening, accesses), traffic density, water availability, etc.

Comments: Terry Stokka briefly discussed two Black Forest organizations (Black Forest Water & Wells; and Friends of Black Forest) that are engaged in monitoring road/water/housing activities [www.friendsofblackforest.org]. He urged close cooperation between NEPCO and their organizations.

Guest Speakers: *[slide presentation is available on NEPCO.org]*

Mark Gunderson, President, Donald Wescott Board of Directors.

Detailed discussion provided on chronology and history of Donald Wescott Fire, with primary focus on events and actions leading to the current inter-governmental agreement (IGA) with Monument Fire. Benefits of unification were discussed in detail including: better resources and coverage, no need for new Monument Fire Station (\$6 million savings), pay and benefit stability, etc. Completion of final phase of this “merger by inclusion” (e.g., dissolution of DWFPD, and DWFPD resident election) is projected for 2024.

Chief Andy Kovacs, Monument Fire.

Monument Fire video was presented. Chief highlighted current priorities as Resilience and Preparedness. Topics discussed included: active consideration of a statewide Wildland-urban interface (WUI) code by the State Legislature; consultant development of comprehensive Pre-Fire Plans for our area that will be accessible by fire and emergency crews; Colorado Springs adoption of Zonehaven emergency and evacuation modeling tool; planning for grant-funded Community Wildfire Plan for this area; and Monument Fire's wildfire chipping program (21 events between May and Sep/Oct).

Jim Reid, Director, Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management/PPROEM.

Speaker noted that PPROEM resulted from the 2019 merger of city and county programs/assets. He overviewed the combined County / Colorado Springs area, noting population is now over 730,000 residents. Topics discussed included: priority focus on Preparedness & Resilience including evacuation planning; the Pikes Peak Region emergency Peak Alert capability—noting that to date, there have been only 21,000 sign-ups out of 730,000); county adoption of the Zonehaven emergency/evacuation planning tool that's projected to cover the city and county; the new Pikes Peak Prepared smart-phone app; the value of broad community and HOA participation in emergency preparedness exercises. Concluding remarks highlighted a plea for HOAs and residents to gain and maintain “situation awareness” of various risks and threats, as well as to engage and work with neighbors and friends on emergency preparedness. Director Reid retires this month so point of contact is now Robin Adair/OEM Coordinator, robinadair@coloradosprings.gov.