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Thermopolis
Hot Springs

Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

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Looking your best at Youth Horse Show



Maggie Jones brushes the tail of her horse before competing in the 4-H and FFA Youth Horse Show on Saturday at the fairgrounds. The event kicked off the 2010 Hot

Springs County Fair. For results of the horse show and the schedule of events for the fair, go to page 9 of this issue of the Independent Record. — Joe Sovo photo

Town master plan changes

by J.D. Stetson

If you live in or near town and you want to replace your sidewalk, build or move into a new home or do something about the deer tearing up your property, expect the rules to change in the next few years after the Town of Thermopolis implements its new master plan.

Community members and consultant Ken Markert of Cody-based MMI Planning flagged these and other zoning and subdivision rules for revision as part of the ongoing effort to produce a new master plan last Thursday night during a recent public meeting.

The document will provide direction for both Thermopolis Town Council members and town employees to improve town services and development in and around Thermopolis.

What they talked about:

■ One idea would be to create public improvement districts to repair sidewalks around town in order to create consistency on streets that have some sidewalks at the curb and others pushed back.

An idea to create an incentive for homeowners to join the district would be to vacate five feet of town right-of-way on the street side of the existing curb and have the sidewalks built in the same space by the homeowners. It would allow the homeowners to gain five feet of yard space in exchange for the new sidewalk.

Most streets in Thermopolis are built 60 feet in width; the decrease in space would save the town some of the cost to replace asphalt, Markert said. The streets would also retain plenty of space for vehicles to traverse the roads in both directions in the residential zones.

A downside to the idea would be that residents could have less space to park trailers or all-terrain vehicles on the streets, Mayor Bill Malloy pointed out.

■ Another topic would be to allow modular or manufactured homes within specialized zones within the city.

The town's codes administration department has seen a trend of more modular or manufactured homes that have requested permits in the last few years instead of stick-built homes.

A key difference between

the manufactured and modular homes is that manufactured homes use U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development standards and modular homes use the International Builders Code, engineer Ron Vanderpool of Engineering Associates said.

Modular homes also require a foundation when installed because it does not have a trailer-like framework. Possible changes to the regulations would make only modular homes that have a foundation allowed on residential lots and manufactured homes limited to trailer parks.

■ The problem of deer within town had the highest number of comments on the citizen survey, but there is not an easy solution.

Malloy has done some research to find out what the town can do about the deer.

He found that in other communities that have tried to address their own deer problem, 95 percent of the people in those communities have responded to complete town surveys by saying, "Leave the deer alone." He thinks it would be the same in Thermopolis.

The growing problem has caused the town's Codes Administration Department to be inundated with one or two requests each week by people who seek to build a six-foot tall fence in their front yards to keep deer out, said Fred Crosby, codes administration assistant. The idea of letting people build a fence around the front of the property would take away from the openness of the community's residential zones and make homes more like stockades, Malloy said.

Chain link fences are also ineffective because the deer will jump over them once they see what is on the other side, Crosby said.

Another issue is the practicality of deer removal. Other communities have tried and failed to address the problem by bringing in sharpshooters to take out the deer or to create an ordinance that would make it a crime to feed the deer.

The group also did not like the idea of allowing bowhunters free reign within the city limits to cut the deer population because of the liability involved.

"If I had my way, we'd get rid of all of them, but I don't know how to do it," Malloy said.

Commission agrees on \$15.23 million budget

by Cindy Glasson

Hot Springs County Commissioners approved their final budget during a public meeting Monday at noon.

The final budget came in at \$15,230,402.32 for fiscal year 2010-11, just over \$400,000 more than last year.

Final assessed value for the county, according to county assessor Shelley Deromedi, is \$194,273,228.

Another \$10,000 was cut from the sheriff's department and jail budgets at the request of the commissioners during the July 6 meeting.

Those monies were transferred over to the courthouse budget to cover the cost of a new air conditioning compressor unit in the jail that unexpectedly failed a couple of weeks ago.

The commissioners agreed to raise the amount given to the county fair board from \$94,114 to \$129,114, a jump of \$35,000.

The additional amount will be used to purchase a new tractor for the fairgrounds.

"I really don't want to pinch them," commissioner Mike Baker said. "Their current tractor is an early 1960s model, so it shows they definitely don't tear up their equipment."

"I was really uncomfortable with the original \$94,000."

An additional \$50,000 was put into the capital improvement line of the general accounts to cover the asbestos abatement, engineering costs and the demolition and site work needed to clear the recently purchased Curtin's Liquor property.

With the above changes, just more than \$17,300 can be placed back in reserves.

"We were still able to have some substantial improvements and stay inside a reasonable budget," commission chairman John Lumley said.

"I want to commend the other commissioners for building these kinds of reserves," Baker said. "Hopefully, we won't have to dip in at the 20-percent level again."

Leadership HSC deadline nears

Application to Leadership Hot Springs County is open to people living or working in Hot Springs County and the deadline to apply is Aug. 2.

The course begins Sept. 16. Other sessions are set for Oct. 21, Nov. 18 and Dec. 16 of this year, and Jan. 20, Feb. 17, March 17 and April 21 in 2011.

Class members are chosen by the steering committee based on the applicant's own merits as presented in the application and supporting documents.

The committee seeks representation from a cross-section of the county with diversity and balance in areas such as occupation, organizational affiliations and individual attributes. The committee looks for:

Commitment and motivation for community service in Hot Springs County.

Ability to make the time commitment.

Individuals who will add to the program and community leadership through diversity of perspective.

Position in employment and/or volunteer organizations resulting in potential to have influence.

Nominees must have the full support of their sponsoring organization or employer.

Individuals may nominate themselves, but must provide evidence that the employer will allow time for participation, including class attendance.

Attendance at all sessions is expected and is mandatory for the first session.

Participants absent from more than two sessions will not graduate. Notification will be by mid-August. Applicants are required to submit two letters of recommendation.

Tuition is \$250, due upon notification of acceptance (non-refundable after Sept. 30), and includes instruction, materials and meals. Scholarships are available.

To apply or for further information, contact Melissa Johnson at the UW Cooperative Extension office, 864-6526, or by email at mjohnson@cw.edu.

Banana split bliss



Lily McMartin doesn't want to miss a drop of her banana split during Banana Split Day, courtesy of Central Bank and Trust employees Friday. — Cindy Glasson photo