

Miranda Benson2

From: PCD Hearings
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 11:04 AM
To: PCD Hearings
Subject: FW: Proposed change to allow development of property adjacent to the west of Homestead Regional Park.

From: PJ Reinbold <reinboldp@elpasotel.net>
Sent: Monday, December 11, 2023 1:25 PM
To: Carrie Geitner <CarrieGeitner@elpasoco.com>
Subject: Proposed change to allow development of property adjacent to the west of Homestead Regional Park.

Dear Commissioner Geitner:

People on nextdoor are concerned about the Planning Commission allowing changes to property adjacent to the west side of Homestead Regional Park. Evidently, it is understood in the plan that "there will be a water shortage but they are attempting to go forward anyway".

My issue as posted in that thread is this:

As far as the BoCC reducing the parcel size from a minimum of 35 acres to 5 acres or 2.5 acres, at least 3 decades ago (probably earlier) the state mandated a minimum of 35 acres for a "domestic" well, which is required for *any* outside water usage. Even setting a bowl of water outside for your dog isn't supposed to be allowed on a "household" rather than "domestic" well permit. The concern is the diminishing water resources in eastern Colorado, and the aquifers - most of which do not replenish - have been getting depleted. Any reduction in parcel size below 35 acres should be on a metropolitan water supply in order to avoid too many wells further depleting the aquifers. At a minimum, they should be restricted to only household-category well permits and water usage.

My suggestion would be to postpone further development of residential communities in the eastern portion of El Paso County until the planned water distribution systems are complete and extend eastward to proposed development areas. This would provide a compelling incentive for developers to assist in financing such pipelines as well as facilitating their construction. The stipulation for sources of water for such distribution must be that it is a replenishing source, such as from a reservoir fed by rainfall and snowmelt.

It is absolutely unacceptable and irresponsible to go forward with a land use change in which a shortage of water is understood, or to allow more wells into already over-tapped aquifers.

We who are residents of the eastern portion of the county pull drinking water and water for livestock from aquifers such as the Laramie-Fox Hills. What are we all to do when those aquifers are gone? In other areas of the state, wells have already gone dry as aquifers have been depleted. A USGS publication titled *Bedrock aquifers and population growth in the Denver Basin, Colorado, USA* states that aquifers, "may be depleted in 10 to 15 years in areas on the west side of the basin. Groundwater is being mined from the aquifer system because the withdrawal through wells exceeds the rate of recharge." <
<https://pubs.usgs.gov/publication/70029731#:~:text=The%20groundwater%20supplies%20were%20once,exceeds%20the%20rate%20of%20recharge.> >

Some aquifers do not recharge; they are non-replenishing. It's my understanding that Laramie-Fox Hills is one that does not replenish.

On the topic of water, sod farms should be addressed at another time. Colorado – over the long haul – cannot afford to be depleting its deep irrigation aquifers that do not replenish by pumping water to grow sod that is shipped across the state to further deplete precious water resources when and where it becomes someone's lawn.

For now, the issue of residential or business development that acknowledges water shortages, yet still wants to move forward by further depleting already over-extended water resources must be addressed rationally. With the

USGS estimating depletion of wells in 10 to 15 years, how will the public and the County respond to the emergency situation and accompanying havoc when that depletion occurs?

Thank you and Sincerely,
Paula Reinbold
Rush, CO

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