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**Letter of Intent**

**Dancing Wolf PUD Amendment-18-002 and Vacation/Replat-18-002**

**Project Representative**

 David or Alyce McElhoes

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**Site Location**

Dancing Wolf Estates (DWE) is a 40 acre PUD subdivision located at the NE corner of Highway 83

 and Hodgen Road in El Paso County. This PUD Amendment involves 25.16 acres within DWE.

 Black Forest Preservation Plan (BFPP) is the Small Area Plan that includes DWE within its boundaries.

 More specifically, Dancing Wolf Estates is within the Spruce Hill Corridor of the

 BFPP.

 **Request Overview**

**Request A:** To amend the PUD to reduce the size of 2, 5+ acre parcels to 2.5+ acre parcels and update the PUD development uses and guidelines. Total acreage in this PUD amendment is 25.16 acres.

**Request B:** To vacate an existing ROW that was dedicated for a parcel of land to the north of DWE and replat lot lines as necessary for both the ROW vacation and division of the 5+ acre lots.

 **Justification**

**Conformance to the El Paso County Policy Plan (EPCPP) and Black Forest Preservation Plan (BFPP):** Dancing Wolf Estates is a 40 acre PUD that was developed from a 40 acre parcel into 7- 5 acre lots in 1996; then in 1998 DWE was rezoned to a PUD, with a Community Commercial parcel (formerly called Neighborhood Business District). During the 1998 rezoning, one residential parcel was divided into 2-2.5 acre parcels. This PUD amendment and vacation/replat proposal is consistent with numerous policies and is overall consistent with the El Paso County Policy Plan and the Black Forest Preservation Plan (BFPP is addressed after the EPCPP justification below). Not all policies that are consistent with the EPCPP or BFPP are presented.

**El Paso Count Policy Plan**

**REQUEST A: Divide 2- 5+ acre residential parcels into 2.5+ acre, define the Community Commercial Uses, and update the PUD development guidelines.**

**Policy 5.1.1** Encourage economic development that enhances a sense of community, provides vigor to the economy and considers the environment while contributing to the overall health of the County. **Smaller parcels within DWE will be more community oriented, more affordable for potential residents, and easier to maintain, especially related to noxious weeds that are common in our open areas.** **Commercial nodes spread out into the community reduces commuting distances between residential and commercial areas alleviating congestion in commercially heavy areas which is environmentally sound.**

**Policy 6.1.3** Encourage new development which is contiguous and compatible with previously developed areas in terms of factors such as density, land use and access**. At the time of the two original DWE submittals the land around DWE was undeveloped agricultural land. Now DWE adjoins 2.5 acre residential subdivisions on 3 sides, and a 39 acre PUD parcel on the 4th side that is not yet developed. Reducing the size of a majority of the lots within DWE will make the parcels more residential in nature and more consistent with neighboring subdivisions. There will be no change in covenants for residential structure requirements or building setbacks from Hodgen or Highway 83.**

**Policy 6.1.11** Plan and implement land development so that it will be functionally and aesthetically integrated within the context of adjoining properties and uses. **DWE would like a majority of the parcels to be smaller and encourage more residential uses of parcels, similar to adjoining properties both within and surrounding DWE.**

**Policy 6.1.15** Recognize the need for new development and redevelopment to respond to changes in demographic, market and technological conditions. **As the parcels around DWE have been developed, 2.5 acre residential parcels have become the norm and yet there is still a very open and rural feel on the northern end of El Paso County.** **As growth has come to Northern El Paso County, 2.5 acre parcels are more desirable to potential residents.**

**Policy 6.2.3** Encourage land use planning and design approaches which create or reinforce the neighborhood concept. **Due to weather conditions (frequently hostile on the Palmer Divide) and terrain issues, 5 acre parcels have made it difficult to have a neighborhood feel in DWE. The smaller parcels currently within DWE have encouraged enjoyable and helpful interactions among neighbors and we would like to promote that.**

**Policy 6.2.7** Utilize the PUD (Planned Unit Development) zone district approach to allow for the accommodation of neighborhood-oriented design features. **DWE is already zoned a PUD and has a Community Commercial Site (CCS) (formerly known as Neighborhood Business District zoning on Lot 1.) and defining its uses better are necessary for the changing environment.**

**Policy 6.3.6** Where feasible, when compatible and service level issues have been addressed; smaller commercial, office and institutional uses should be allowed to locate within, or convenient to, the residential neighborhoods they serve or complement. **The corner lot is zoned CCS for this reason and defined uses show better how it may be utilites**

**Policy 6.3.9** Promote the multiple use combination of non-residential uses such as shopping, offices, government and education in a manner which maximizes the use of available infrastructure during weekdays, evenings and weekends. **Community Commercial Site (CCS) will better allow for a variety of different options, such as those listed above, when developed in the future. The square footage on the CCS is 7,000 sf. a similar structure size to many homes in the adjoining developments.**

**Issue 6.4…** And finally, some residents wish to maintain a rural life style by maintaining a number of grazing animals (horses) or domestic pets, while other residents do not. The County experiences many problems concerning neglect of animals, associated animal smells and noises, and overgrazing leading to the occurrence of noxious weeds. **When the majority of lots in DWE are reduced to 2.5+ acres, the covenants will restrict housing large animals, have reduced outside well water use, and require the planting of 4-6’ pine trees. This will reduce mixed use dissent possibilities and restricts uses to be similar to the other 2.5+acre lots within DWE and the surrounding subdivisions.**

**REQUEST B:** **The deeded ROW from 1996 for access to the land north of DWE, now known as Majestic Pines (MP), is no longer needed as MP accesses entirely through Blue Heron Springs Lane. Currently the ROW is unused and unmaintained. We are requesting this land be returned back to adjoining land owners.**

**Policy 6.2.2** Promote the unique identity of neighborhoods through the use of focal points, parks, trails and open spaces, preservation of significant natural features, compatible location and design of mixed uses, and promotion of pedestrian and other non-motorized means of travel. **Eliminating an unnecessary ROW and allowing the land to return to adjoining owners assures it will be properly maintained and mowed to keep noxious weeds down. It also allows some of the ROW to be utilized for trails for the residents of DWE and, with additional land set aside by the original owners of DWE, trails will connect to the future County Regional Trail along Hodgen Road that was dedicated in the original plat in 1996. The natural no-build drainage easement running the length of DWE will also remain open and undeveloped.**

**Policy 6.2.9** Discourage high volume traffic through neighborhoods by use of innovative techniques including traffic calming. **Eliminating the unnecessary ROW ensures Dancing Wolf Way will stay a quiet, low use, cul-de-sac that serves just the residents within DWE.**

**Policy 8.2.4** Encourage the use of a coordinated County-wide approach in all applicable parks, trails and open space planning efforts. **Part of the ROW will be used for trails connection to the existing trail easement along Hodgen. This supports the El Paso County Health suggestion for planned walk-ability of residential communities. Walk-ability features help in the effort to reduce obesity and associated heart diseases.**

**Policy 9.2.3** Strictly limit direct access onto major transportation corridors in order to preserve their functional capacity. **There will be no additional roads or access points other than the existing Dancing Wolf Way which only accesses Hodgen.**

 **Black Forest Preservation Plan: Requests A & B**

The Black Forest Preservation Plan (BFPP) is a Small Area Plan that includes Dancing Wolf Estates within its boundaries. More specifically, Dancing Wolf Estates falls within the Spruce Hill/Highway 83 Corridor. Applied holistically, Dancing Wolf Estates PUD Amendment is in keeping with the overall plan, spirit and intent of the Black Forest Preservation Plan both in its residential and commercial development. When referencing BFPP “The Plan” Introduction paragraph 3, this request is in keeping with all listed guidelines.

#### Black Forest Preservation Plan, Land Use Scenario: Page 93 #5 Spruce Hill/Highway 83 Corridor: “Commercial projects should be approved only if they are clearly oriented toward the needs of local residents. Those commercial activities which meet this criterion should be encouraged to locate only at the intersections of Hodgen and Walker Roads with State Highway 83. Access to these potential commercial centers should be designed so that satisfactory through traffic movements are maintained. A rustic or rural design theme is suggested for any commercial development in this area.” Dancing Wolf Estates is located at one of these identified areas and was approved for a PUD in in 1998. At that time, the corner lot was approved as a Neighborhood Business District (now called a Community Commercial Parcel). When developed, buildings will be low profile, country barn style buildings similar to adjoining buildings within Dancing Wolf Estates. Site specific traffic studies, will be completed when the parcels are submitted for development and the sites will only have access from the existing Dancing Wolf Way onto Hodgen Road.

**Policy 3.5** Generally support residential development which compliments and enhances the areas’ terrain, vegetation, and natural resources**. DWE has developed a road, lots, and home sites that preserve the natural terrain and a 3.76 acre no-build area that runs the entire North/South length of DWE, thereby maintaining high environmental quality and a rural feel. Homes are covenanted to be of natural earth tones, are low profile and generally built to fit into the natural terrain. Very minimal trees were removed when homes were built and no trees were removed for the initial land and road development in 1996.**

**Policy 1.2: “**Allow nodes of higher density residential, commercial…in areas specified on the concept plan and described in the land use scenario.” Further, the Land Use Scenario and Unit Boundaries states “densities comparable to those in the Walden III subdivision (on the order of one dwelling unit per acre) would be appropriate if development is carefully sited and it can be shown that adequate services can be provided.” **DWE is specified on the concept plan as having a commercial node and a higher residential density area. Density with this PUD amendment is approximately one dwelling unit for every 3.60 acres (25.16/7 units), well below that stated as appropriate for this area and below neighboring subdivisions. DWE also has a water augmentation plan and OWTS (septic systems) analysis which are adequate services for each parcel. An augmentation plan and an OWTS analysis are presented with this submittal.**

**Policy 8.6** Prevent overgrazing in the area: **Smaller lots in DWE will be restricted from housing large grazing animals, thereby reducing the possibility of overgrazing of the parcels.**

**Table 11: Small Lot Subdivisions Black Forest Planning Area.** There are sixteen subdivisions listed in this table and the average size of lots in these subdivisions is 1.71 acres per dwelling. **The density for DWE is below all of these 16 subdivisions and has larger acreage per dwelling unit.**

**Waiver Request: Open Space Allocation**

When originally platted in 1996, PUD Development Plans were not bound to the current 10% open space requirement. We are requesting a waiver to this newer requirement as we have extensive trails and no-build areas within DWE. When platted, we dedicated a 20’ trail along Hodgen to the El Paso County Parks Master Plan. Further, dedicated public bicycle ROWs already exist along Hodgen and Highway 83. DWE also has a large no-build area and added trails are proposed inside DWE for the residents of Dancing Wolf. These will be dedicated to the residents of DWE and will be maintained by the DWE HOA. The County Regional Trail easement along Hodgen Road is .518 acres. The dedicated no-build natural drainage area that runs the North/South length of DWE constitutes approximately 3.76 acres. A landscape tract of approximately .5 acre is proposed to be added, for beautification, in the middle of this drainage area (see plat map). With this PUD amendment another .34 acres in walking/biking trails within DWE is proposed and will connect to the County Regional Trail along Hodgen. The original dedicated trail on Hodgen, the no-build land, and the added proposed trails totals 4.62 acres, which exceed the 10% open space requirement (2.51 acres) and makes the common land more useable for DWE residents. In lieu of open space we are requesting to have usable land in the form of trails and no-build areas.

**Drainage/Grading/Erosion Control Plan**

Drainage and erosion control in DWE will follow **Policy 11.3.1** in the El Paso County Policy Plan which states: “Where feasible, support the use of natural or naturalistic drainage approaches rather than hard line solutions.” **When DWE was originally developed in 1996 a drainage study was completed with a safety factor of one home per acre (well above what will ever be in DWE). At that time a natural drainage area ran the length of the property and was designated as a no-build area. No change in the drainage is anticipated with this amendment request except where an additional driveway crosses the main drainage/no build area for the added Lot 3. A drainage letter/analysis has been completed for that specific area and is included in this submittal as a separate document. No further grading will be done within DWE with this request, except what has been addressed with Lot 3, so no additional erosion control is necessary. The grading for Lot 3 & 4 driveway will be done when the parcel is developed.**

**Purposes & Need for Replat:** To better utilize the land for more residential purposes rather than for horses or other large grazing animals and to be more consistent in land density to neighboring parcels. To add trails to increase the walk-ability within the subdivision for the residents within DWE. To return the unused ROW land to adjoining owners for maintenance and trails. To adapt Community Commercial sites to better meet growth and uses in the area.

**Total Acres in Requested Area:** The acreage in the PUD Amendment and vacation/replat is 25.16 acres.

**Total Residential Units/Densities for Each Dwelling Unit:** Total residential units in the requested area are 6. Densities for residential dwelling units in requested area will be 1 unit in 3.09 acres (residential acreage 18.55/6).

**Number of Commercial Sites Proposed & Floor Area Ratio of Commercial Uses:** A Community Commercial site has already be approved. Total Community Commercial units in the requested area are 1 and the density will be 1 unit in 5 acres. Proposed floor area of commercial sites is 7,000. Floor area ratio is an average of 3.2% for the parcel.

**Number of mobile home units and densities:** None

**Typical Lot Sizes:** **Length and width:** Typical lot sizes after the proposed divisions will be 2.5+ acres, and the average lengths/widths are as follows (only divided lots listed; flag stems excluded): Amended DWE Lot 1- 358’ x 318’, Lot 2- 291’ x 379’, Lot 3- 299’ x 388’; Lot 4- 311’ x 411’, Lot 5 268’ x 525’, Lot 6- 308’ x 319’.

**Type of Proposed Recreational Facilities:** Added trails within DWE to be maintained by the active DWE HOA and adjoin to a current trail along Hodgen Road which is dedicated to the El Paso County Regional Trail System.

**Phased Construction:** This DWE PUD amendment will allow for the development of all residential parcels upon final platting. The sequence of construction and development of Lots 1 and 2, if developed as Community Commercial, will be per current Land Development Code (LDC) requirements. The timeline of development for Community Commercial sites may adjust due to economic conditions. The additional trails will be useable upon platting. If any grading of trails is desired, it will be completed upon HOA approval. Any necessary maintenance of the trail land will commence upon platting.

**Water and Sewer Provided:**  The water source for all lots will be individual wells through an existing water decree and augmentation plan (original decree 94CW198 and revised decree 18CW3006). Sewer will be provided through individual OWTS.

**Proposed Uses, Relationship between Uses and Densities:** DWE will consist of nine Residential parcels and two Community Commercial parcels. For all of Dancing Wolf Estates the densities of the residential lots are 6, 2.5+ acre lots and 3, 5.0+ acre lots. The 2.5+ acre lots allow less outside watering and have some large animal restrictions. The 5+ acre lots have some equestrian and other animal uses. Some fencing between smaller and larger lots exists and there are a variety of natural screens from trees and land topography between the smaller and larger lots. All lots, large and small, have the same overall atmosphere created by the neighborhood’s desire to enjoy the land through outdoor living, animal keeping (pets and professional), and residential home occupation. The 5 acre Community Commercial lots has a 7,000 sf size limit, a maximum of 35’ height restriction, and neutral color requirements to help the buildings feel blended into the surrounding residences. Additionally, when developed, it will abide by the current LDC.

**Areas of Landscaping:** DWE has a developed entrance with a landscaped, decorative sign and significant mature trees. This was completed in 1996. Each residential lot within the amended area of DWE that currently has less than a minimum of 5-4’ or greater pine trees will be required to plant an additional 4- 6’ pine trees and re-vegetate all disturbed areas. Homeowners will plant these additional trees on their property where they choose, as they develop their lots per covenants. Since there will be no way to irrigate plantings until homes are occupied applicant does not propose plantings for which no water will be available. A landscape easement of approximately .5 acre will be added in the no-build area on Lot 3 (see map). This area is wet in nature and will be planted with 4-6’ aspen trees and 2-6’ cottonwood trees. It is already vegetated with natural, low growing grass. Landscaping for the Community Commercial sites will comply with current LDC and will be completed at the time of development, again for available water reasons.

**Proposed Access Locations:** All lots within DWE will be accessed only from Dancing Wolf Way, a cul-de-sac into the 40.273 acres. Each lot will adjoin Dancing Wolf Way with a minimum 30’ of frontage. There will be no access to Highway 83.

 Per CDOT, a Traffic Impact Letter has been submitted with this amendment.

**Approximate Acres and percent of Land to be set aside as Open Space:** Please see “waiver request” on this item. With the existing and added trails and the no-build area 4.62 acres will be open, undeveloped land. With this PUD amendment Dancing Wolf Estates will remain very open and continue to have a rural feeling from all perspectives: to residents within the neighborhood, to adjoining neighborhoods, and from the major arterials it borders.