

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted two resolutions last year concerning sustainability relating to energy and resource conservation. These are very broad reaching, and relate to the funding approved by the voters in 2005 and operating the county more efficiently. In addition, the Planning Commission and the BOCC have asked the Land Use Department to develop some sustainability goals and policies for the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (BCCP). The Planning Commission is set to adopt a new Sustainability Element in the BCCP on May 16. You can find these on our web page at <http://www.co.boulder.co.us/lu/>.

One additional request from the BOCC is to look at “special character areas” such as Eldorado Springs, Allenspark, Hygiene, and Eldora among others. As I mentioned in an article a couple of years ago, Eldora has neither development guidelines nor regulations related to what is built or could be built other than the Boulder County Land Use Code. As almost everyone who has tried to do anything in Eldora knows, these regulations do not fit the community either physically or as it is laid out in lots and blocks. With zoning requiring houses to be setback 15 to 25 feet from property lines, it is very difficult to do anything on old townsite lots. This leads to a number of issues. We process a significant number of “variance” requests from the zoning regulations because of small lot sizes (a variance, if approved, permits the building to get an exception from having to meet certain zoning requirements). We also value the character of the community in style and size of structures. Although it hasn’t happened, at some point, we feel that we will get requests for residences which are completely out of character for Eldora. We have, on the positive side, seen a recent increase in historic landmark applications, several so far this year.

With this in mind, the BOCC has asked us to start working with each special character area, starting with Eldorado Springs. We would like to work with the Eldora community next year. What we want to do is discuss a new zoning district, specific to the needs of Eldora, with appropriate setbacks, house sizes, both height and square footage; attempt to straighten out the confusion, and for want of a better word, mess of roads in the community; and deal with any other land use issues the community thinks are important.

We have had several setback violations brought to our attention recently. We are reticent to deal with these at this time because we may be able to solve the problem through this comprehensive look at Eldodra. In the meantime, the BOCC has asked that we do not enforce against these violations, provided they do not involve serious health or safety issues until we have developed new regulations for the community. The worst thing would be to enforce against someone and then change the regulations in such a way that it would be allowed next year.

We intend to hold a public meeting this summer, probably in July, in Eldora to discuss this, lay out a process of approach for 2008, and answer any questions

there may be for now. We will be sending a mailed notice in plenty of time for this public meeting. In the meantime, feel free to contact the planning staff if you have any questions or thoughts.