



Taos County to consider land use changes Aug. 14

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Taos County is contemplating a few changes to its existing land use code, which would allow the county to adopt zoning for a handful of neighborhood associations.

The proposed changes will be considered at a public hearing Aug. 14.

The county commission dropped a major overhaul of the land use code during a series of heated hearings in January. Angry residents showed up en masse just before a vote on the issue arguing that they had been left out of the process and that the new code failed to recognize traditional uses.

The overhaul would have redefined the process for considering and approving land use issues — a process that is now widely considered overly burdensome and expensive, especially for business owners.

The new code would have also created a process by which neighborhood associations could have brought zoning maps to the county for approval. The stated purpose of the new code was to protect sensitive agricultural and residential land while providing defined areas for business to develop.

When the overhaul failed to pass, neighborhoods who had spent years drafting plans said they were left with no way to go forward.

In June, members of the Upper Las Colonias Neighborhood Association approached the county commission about adjusting the current code so that individual neighborhood zoning maps could be adopted and put in place. The association hired former Taos County Manager Adam Baker to come up with suggestions and present them to the commission.

Based on that proposal, the county has since drafted its own revisions to the current code, which include adding or changing definitions, and adding language that would make it clear how neighborhood zones would fit into the and use process. There are also changes to how conflicts of interest and ex parte communications are handled.

The proposed changes are available for review at the Taos County Planning Department. They can also be downloaded by visiting www.taosnews.com.

For more information, contact the planning department at (575) 737-6440.

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