



## **Town adds areas to annexation request; hearing set**

**By Matthew van Buren**

*The Taos News*, 11/1/2012

The town of Taos is requesting another hearing from the state Boundary Commission after adding two more areas to those it hopes to annex.

The Boundary Commission came to Taos in February to hear the town's initial request to annex the Este Es Road area and 18 other parcels. However, it was determined legal notification requirements were not met, so the hearing adjourned without a vote.

At the time of the February hearing, town Planning Director Bill Morris said most of the areas already receive town services and are contiguous with other town properties. The town is attempting to clean up its boundaries by annexing many of the small parcels, some of which are "islands" of county land within the town, split by the town boundary or properties for which the annexation paperwork has been lost.

According to information from the Planning and Zoning Department, the Attorney General's Office issued an opinion in July stating that the Boundary Commission should "rehear the town's entire request in order to eliminate a justification for an appeal." A hearing is now scheduled Nov. 29, with Nov. 30 being held as an "overflow time" if necessary. The two properties the town has added to its request include Las Haciendas Subdivision, a 41-acre area south of Cruz Alta Road, and 39 parcels, totaling 62 acres, along the east side of Gusdorf Road from Los Pandos to Cruz Alta.

Morris prepared a memorandum describing the process and the additional parcels notes that Las Haciendas Subdivision is "wholly surrounded by the town of Taos municipal boundary on all four sides."

Regarding the Gusdorf Road parcels, the memo states that the area is surrounded on three sides by the town, and the request meets the two tests for annexation.

The Boundary Commission may consider two factors when making its determination: whether a property is contiguous with the municipality, and whether the municipality can provide it with services, such as utilities, road maintenance, police and fire protection, in a "reasonable period of time."

"They do meet the text for annexations," Morris told the Town Council Oct. 9 before the council voted unanimously to add the areas to its request.

During the February hearing, some members of the public objected to higher tax rates, while others opposed requirements to hook up to municipal water and sewer systems. Others said they were already receiving town services and were happy with them.

Dave Romero, an attorney hired by the town, said it was important to plan for growing infrastructure needs, and municipal water and sewer systems are good for the community as a whole.