

Planner's leaving could rekindle town/county partnership

By J.R. Logan

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A year after being hired, Town of Taos Planning Director Martha Perkins has resigned.

Taos Town Manager Rick Bellis confirmed Perkins' last day will be Aug. 1.

Perkins was hired under the former town administration. Officials at the time said they were looking for a candidate to fix a "broken" planning department that needed a "major overhaul."

The town offered Perkins a job in July 2013. She previously worked for the state Public Regulation Commission and Los Alamos County.

Bellis said Perkins' departure might make room to revisit the possibility of creating a joint town/county planning department. "Everybody's really in the same boat," Bellis said, explaining that each government in the region has a hard time attracting and holding on to qualified planning department employees.

Last year, the town handed its code enforcement responsibilities over to the county, but the arrangement was shortlived, in part because of bitter antagonism between officials from both governments.

Bellis said he had not yet talked with Taos County Manager Stephen Archuleta about revisiting the proposal, but Archuleta said in a phone interview the county would consider it. "We would be interested," Archuleta said Wednesday. "Anytime we can streamline services for the best of the community, we're all for it."

The town council also extended an offer this week to an unnamed candidate to replace Jacob Caldwell as town attorney. Caldwell took the position in March on an interim basis. Bellis said would not disclose the name of the council's pick until he or she accepted the position.