



THE TAOS NEWS

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Chamisa Verde: SmartCode ‘test subject’ ready to go

By Patricia Chambers

The Taos News, June 18, 2008

The first step toward test-ing the proposed SmartCode was taken Tuesday (June 17) with the passage of a resolution establishing the Chamisa Verde subdivision as a Neighborhood Plan.

Councilor Amy Quintana asked Long Range Planner Matthew Foster why the SmartCode, which will be a guide for a revised land use regulation ordinance, should not be adopted before the “Neighborhood Plan” is imposed over the 137-acre plot near the Youth & Family Center along Paseo del Ca-on East.

Foster said the council reso-lution would alert builders and developers in the neighbor-hood that the town intends to approve the SmartCode in the future.

Town Planner Allen Vigil described the resolution as a “visionary” plan similar to the Vision 20/20. “There is a clear distinction between the Neighborhood Plan and a zon-ing ordinance. This starts the process,” he said.

“It is very important that we stage this (SmartCode) process,” Vigil pointed out.

“We thought this out very carefully. It’s important to get the buy-in from the neighbor-hood for this mixed use zon-ing concept. The next step, the regulation phase is the fine tun-ing,” Vigil said.

Councilor Darren Còrdova said the pilot project at Chamisa Verde will serve to “get more out the land” so that the cost of housing at the affordable hous-ing project will be low enough for Taos residents to afford to buy a home.

Foster pointed out that the current land use regulations would not permit the mixed-zone neighborhoods suggested in the SmartCode.

Following the discussion, the council voted unanimously to approve the pilot program.

The Neighborhood Plan at Chamisa Verde will incorporate several zones, Foster said.

The T-3 zone, modeled on Burch Street; the T-4 zone, which would resemble Ledoux Street; and the T-5, which is modeled on Paseo del Pueblo Norte.

The Neighborhood Plan for Chamisa Verde and the properties surrounding it would include about 20 small parks and public buildings, such as library or daycare, as well as a main plaza, Foster said.

Details regarding parking and street layout would be determined in public hearings with the Planning & Zoning Commission as the builders define their projects, he added.



The SmartCode foundation has been laid with the Chamisa Verde affordable housing subdivision set to serve as the test model.

File photo