



City of Manitou Springs Newsletter



2015 budget addresses variety of needs

By Jason Wells
City Administrator

Greetings Bulletin readers and a Happy 2015 to you.

I am thrilled to be providing this, my second-ever quarterly update from the desk of the City Administrator. Given how preoccupied I was with the budgeting process for the approaching year, I refrained from providing a submission last quarter. But I am happy to offer my perspective on that process now, and a 2015 budget that I see as ambitious yet also careful. The City's spending plan responds to a number of continuing flood recovery needs while also providing for multiple community-led initiatives such as continued free shuttle service in town and an advanced study of the City's mineral spring dynamics. At the same time, it nevertheless contemplates a very healthy end-of-year General Fund reserve that eclipses that of all past years at approximately

\$1 million. If you would like more details about the 2015 budget, the full document is available on the City's homepage at manitouspringsgov.com.

With the commencement of the New Year, much of my attention has turned to current or imminent changes with respect to crucial support staff. As you will read about in his own separate column, veteran Director of Public Services, Bruno Pothier, will be leaving us at the end of next month. Having spent over five years at this position – one which is incredibly demanding even without the unavoidable disaster recovery/mitigation obligations thrust upon it in recent years – Bruno is ready to move on to his next professional pursuit. I am lucky to have been afforded an opportunity to get to know Bruno and work closely with him since my arrival. And while I regret that the City will be losing his sharp mind and wit, along with his incredibly deep commitment to his work, I wish him

the best and am happy that he intends to remain a member of the Manitou Springs community.

For those of you interested in or involved with the City's continuing flood recovery work, you will soon be meeting a new face on that front as well. Around this time last year, Roger Miller assumed the role of Recovery Coordinator for the City and assisted my predecessor greatly in getting a multitude of complex initiatives off the ground insofar as multi-agency financing and regional coordination was concerned. As the daunting Williams Canyon drainage project took on a life of its own however, the City found it necessary to have a full-time representative/project manager onsite and Roger's unique knowledge of the drainage and the physical improvements thereto have thus found him regularly committed in the field. As the Williams Canyon improvements continue, so does Roger's involvement on that project

and earlier this week, he and the project engineer presented a wonderful wrap-up of the recently-completed Phase I of the Williams improvements to the regional Waldo Canyon Recovery group.

In addition to the sweeping changes underway in Williams Canyon, a number of other unaddressed projects in the realm of community flood mitigation continue to persevere as do City Hall's need for someone who can attach available resources to those needs. With that in mind, we anticipate that by the time these words go to print, a new Recovery Coordinator may already have been named. You can expect that once this person gets settled, community outreach will be a central charge of the daily obligations. So if you haven't heard from them in the near future and would like to provide input to the City on anything

See BUDGET/page 7

Public Works Department

Bruno Pothier,
Public Works Director

Happy New Year and farewell from your Public Works Director.

This being my last yearend report as I have resigned my Public Works Director position (my last day will be February 27th 2015), I wanted first to say “thank you” to the City Council and Mayor, both former and currently sitting. It has been a pleasure to serve you. I have the upmost respect for what you do as the position you hold can be extremely demanding and at times the least rewarding, but each of you handle yourselves with dignity and serve with the best interests of the community in mind.

I also want to thank the community of Manitou Springs for your support over the last five and half years. You are a great community and it was an honor to have been selected for the Public Works Director position. During these years I constantly thrived to improve our quality of life. Some of

the achievements I am the proudest of are the \$6M ARRA project which replaced thousands of feet of water/sewer pipeline, installed 12 new pressure reduction valves, a new raw water metered connection with CSU and a new ballast tank. All these projects were completed on budget.

Other successful projects were the construction of a new intersection at Park Ave. and Manitou Ave., a new roundabout at the west end and the completion of numerous FEMA projects to bring the City back from the devastation of the numerous flooding events.

For many residents, the Public Works Department is what I like to call a “transparent department”, always present but rarely seen. Many residents do not even know that Manitou Springs has its own Public Works Department. These employees work behind the scenes and are committed and dedicated to their work. This department is the one which maintains the infrastructure of the City and is a large part

of what makes Manitou Springs a great place to live. We maintain all the parks, the cemetery, repair public sidewalks, plow the snow, fix pot holes, patch and stripe the streets, replace traffic signage, clear plugged sewer mains, repair broken water mains, ensure that water is available and safe, decorate the City for the holidays and yes, we even pick up road kill! Public Works staff members are on call 24/7 to respond to any emergencies which affect our quality of life.

After the catastrophic flooding events and long after the first responders are gone, they are the ones still working countless hours to clean the City and remove any remains of the disaster. For these reasons, I give a huge thank you to all of the wonderful Public Works staff for their amazing work. It has been a pleasure to work with you.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the rest of the City Staff as they are a great group of dedicated employees and it has

been an honor to serve beside you.

Other than saying “good bye”, I also wanted to inform the community of the upcoming projects that will be taking place. The next few years will be busy for the City as there are many grant funded projects in the works including the replacement of the Crystal Park culverts and the construction of an infrastructure upstream of these culverts. These projects will have to be completed by April 2016.

Other projects include the rehabilitation of the west side of Manitou Ave. from Park Ave. to Serpentine Dr., and the rehabilitation of the east side of Manitou Ave. from the overpass to the east arch, all scheduled for construction in 2016. In closing, I again would like to say thank you to everybody for your support.

PS: The Public Services Monthly reports are posted on the City Website (manitouspringsgov.com) under:

Government/Departments/
Public Services.

Manitou Springs Fire Department

By John Forsett
Fire Chief

As your new Fire Chief, this is my first newsletter on behalf of the Manitou Springs Fire Department. With just a few days into this new position, I felt, rather than fill the page with a lot of statistics and where we’ve been and where we’re going type stuff, I would tell you a little bit about the greatest and most important asset to the fire department, its people.

Being involved in any response activity as a firefighter is an exceptional experience. There are times when things go just right and you are left with the best feeling in the world. On other less frequent

occasions, things don’t go just right and you are left with anger, sadness or other emotions. No matter what the outcome, it will be a shared experience, and in the end a firefighter will say, “That’s why I do this” or “I love giving back to my community this way.”

There are a multitude of reasons that an individual may give for why they became a firefighter. Maybe it was a neighbor who said, “I volunteer, you should try it”, or a by-stander at an incident scene who thinks, that looks really cool, how do I get to do that? After a time though, every first responder realizes one thing, because of all of those experiences, and the long hours of training and engaging in the organization and community,

diverse in nature. No one day at City Hall is ever anything like another before or after it and this is one of the particular reasons I love this field of work as much as I do. It’s been a wonderful ride thus far here in Manitou Springs and I’m constantly looking forward to the next challenge and getting to meet more members of this wonderful community that I have felt so fully embraced by since I arrived last summer.

Thank you!

they have built some of the most satisfying and important relationships that they will ever have. Relationships built on trust, compassion, excitement and toil. Relationships that will be remembered and last the rest of their life.

For me, I count one of those relationships to be former Fire Chief Keith Buckmiller. He is one of the people that I became friends with because of Manitou Springs Fire Department, and I would like you all to share with me great thanks for the service he has provided over the years as a firefighter and Chief Officer of our department. I think it is most important to recognize Keith’s leadership for bringing consistent Advanced Life Support capabilities to the citizens and visitors of Manitou Springs. He did this by ensuring that the fire department budgeted for, employed and staffed at least one Paramedic/Firefighter on a daily basis. His passion for emergency medical response needs will continue to impact our operations throughout the years.

I find it difficult to convey to you in a newsletter how important to me the people are that make up the Manitou Springs Volunteer Fire Department. These are folks that spend numerous hours involved in

training and preparation to ensure that when the citizens and visitors of Manitou Springs are having a bad day, they are prepared to go out of their way and give a helping hand. They do this for medical emergencies, fire incidents, traffic accidents, rescue events, and the list goes on. And they don’t stop with the experiences that make their adrenaline pump. In their spare time they prepare and participate in activities that enrich the community, such as support for Muscular Dystrophy, Fourth of July fireworks, food baskets for the needy and Santa Claus at the Town Clock. Some are involved in physical fitness activities and competitions together, and again the list goes on.

Please share my thanks and prayers for the individuals that make up the Manitou Springs Volunteer Fire Department, current and past members, officers, firefighters and paid staff. They are all professionals in every way, and along with their families, spouses and/or significant others, committed and dedicated to service. Most importantly, they are your friends and neighbors.

If you are a resident of the City of Manitou Springs and are interested in becoming a member of the Fire Department, please stop by and visit with us. Be safe.

BUDGET/from page 6

recovery-related, please come seek them out.

As these developments in the City’s personnel world unfold, I continue to oversee the regular business of government – various concerns such as parking, community planning, historic preservation, snow removal, facilities maintenance, mineral spring management, and economic development keep the days both moving quickly and

Historic Preservation Commission

By Anne Hyde, Chair,
Manitou Springs Historic
Preservation Commission

As a Historic Preservation Commission and as citizens who live in Manitou Springs we all share the challenge of protecting our community. As we figure out how best to protect this place from flood and fire, we also need to protect its unique historical character. Remembering two things helps us as we think through the value of controlling floods and preventing fire. First, this is an old town and second it has a unique geography that makes fire and flood pretty inevitable.

Manitou Springs' history is evident everywhere and we can use the past to help us understand our fire and flood

plans in the present. We have structures going back to the 1870s, rock formations, canyons, and mineral springs that go back eons. We have endured floods again and again and we have had damaging fires that burned important buildings numerous times as well. As a community, we have had a lot of practice in dealing with these disasters that roar down our canyons and onto our streets over the past 150 years. Our Volunteer Fire Department is one of the oldest in the state. We have the oldest fire hose cart in the state, a state of the art example from 1880. Newspapers record floods that destroyed parts of town and also how the town rebuilt more thoughtfully each time.

We live in a unique place, with narrow canyons, high red rock walls and

beautiful rushing waters. This place, at the base of Ute Pass and Pikes Peak (or Sun Mountain) has attracted visitors since humans first visited here. And, since time immemorial, its beautiful setting also puts us at unusual risk for flash floods. Our beautiful downtown streets, with their historic hotels, spa buildings, spectacular Queen Anne homes, rustic cabins, churches, and parks are in a flood plain. We can't change those physical facts but we should recognize that fire and flood have always been a part of the mix of life here and Manitou residents have managed them well.

The City of Manitou and its partners, Roger Miller with Ensign Engineering, Wright Water Engineering, and Perco Construction, at

work up in Williams Canyon and along Fountain Creek, have done a terrific job of balancing these challenges. Civil engineering can be compatible with historic preservation. City Hall, the Spa Building, the Arcade and the familiar old buildings that cling to Fountain Creek will never be entirely protected from catastrophic floods. We can't wall off the water but we can give it safer paths through town.

Our historic buildings, red rocks and Manitou greenstone should be featured in any plan to protect the town. The Historic Preservation Commission, the City and state have partnered very effectively to ensure this will happen. Attractive walls and semi-permanent flood barriers will soon appear in crucial parts of downtown.

Urban Renewal Authority

By Marcy Morrison
Chair Person, URA

The Urban Renewal Authority is a small seven-member board that has recently begun to meet monthly on the third Friday at 8:30 a.m. We have been working on a number of issues concerning the east end of our city. Our members are appointed by the Mayor and we solicit new members using the City web site, local paper and word of mouth. We do have an opening for someone with a financial background or past and present knowledge in the banking arena. The mission of the URA is to enhance and redevelop properties in the east corridor of Manitou Springs.

There has been considerable research conducted about this area and continuing information is being gathered in order to revitalize several acres of land and buildings that certainly have potential for successful business activities as well as opportunities for developing some affordable housing units. The key is finding the right mix of development and resources in order to create a pleasing environment that visitors and residents agree complement and enhance our downtown business core. The URA area extends from the east Manitou Springs arch to the U.S. Highway 24 interchange.

The committee is now working with consultants on code revisions to support the redevelopment as well

as an overlay zoning design standard so that the end result will be approval by the Planning Commission, City Council, plus all the regulatory standards. Our desire is to assure that the east end and the rest of the City blend together, and yet incorporate new ideas that will add to the investments already made by past grants and budgeted moneys that the City has spent in past years. Naturally, we also have to consider all the infrastructure changes that will be put in place in the next few years that connect the West End Colorado Springs Project that is currently in the design stage. Collaboration is continuing with the City of Colorado Springs, El Paso County and Manitou Springs concerning the West End Project

which came about a few years ago after the Westside and Manitou Springs citizens complained that the area had been sorely neglected for several decades and some funding should be made available to make the necessary infrastructure improvements such as drainage, curbs, and sidewalks. Our goal should be a corridor that is a contemporary transportation route from 31st through Manitou Springs.

Our work plan will be a transparent document and will certainly be available for citizens to review and comment on when we have completed our recommendations. If there are questions please feel free to contact the URA members or the Planning Staff at City Hall.

Parking Department

We recently passed the 18-month mark of the paid parking program and by all indications it has been a tremendous success for our wonderful city, its residents, merchants, visitors and Standard Parking. We continue to work hard to manage an effective but fair parking program for everyone. Parking personnel continually come address constructive solutions to comments, concerns, complaints and issues affecting the parking program and our customers. The program is evolving as we tweak and make changes to better serve you.

Please stop by the parking office located in the City Hall building at 606 Manitou Avenue or call 719-685-2549 or 2571 should you have any comments or parking-related

issues. In addition, parking enforcement officers are there to serve and assist customers in any way possible. Feel free to stop officers when you see them on the street if you need something.

The Manitou Springs parking department offers numerous permits for long and short term parking needs such as center lane, off-street lots, residential, church, moving, construction and event. Just contact the office for prices and availability.

Thank you to everyone who has and continues to help us make the parking program the best it can be for the community!

**Management and Staff
Manitou Springs Parking
Department**

Park and Rec

By Danu Fatt

In the last half of 2014, the Park and Rec Advisory Board completed re-painting and doing minor repairs to the Soda Springs Pavilion with wonderful volunteers from Pikes Peak United Way and with the professional help from Leiser Painting.

PARAB also awarded mini-grants to Concrete Couch, the Little Free Libraries and Commonwheel Art Fair, and partnered with OSAC (Open Space Advisory Committee) for the successful award of an OSAC GOCO grant. We also finalized the design and issues faced with re-building the Tot Lot.

In the upcoming quarter of 2015,

PARAB will meet for a strategic planning session at the end of this month to earmark priorities to accomplish within a 1-to-3-to-6 year goal. We will also be finalizing a memorial policy for memorial requests within our parks, starting the re-build of the Tot Lot, and continue tending to the general upkeep and policies of our parks.

Finally, it is with regret that we are losing the invaluable services of Public Works Director, Bruno Pothier. With his knowledge and expertise, many of our projects were able to come to fruition, and his input and partnership with the PARAB was a productive and enjoyable one. We wish him well in his next endeavor.

Manitou Springs Police Department

At the Manitou Springs Police Department we strive to maintain the safety and security of the community we serve. It is our mission to build and maintain a sense of safety and high quality of life through exemplary customer service. In order to achieve this mission we must educate the community, create an officer presence that is friendly and informative, and enforce the laws and ordinances of the state and city we serve.

We have several ways in which we can educate the community. As officers patrol the community we check residences for anything unusual such as: garage doors left open at night, cars in the area that do not belong, dome lights left on, and suspicious people walking in a neighborhood where they do not belong. As officers observe these unusual occurrences we will contact the homeowners and advise them a door has been left open and caution them about the safety hazards of leaving doors unsecured.

Although Manitou Springs is not a violent crime ridden community, the crime of opportunity that we as a community create will still be taken advantage of. Unlocked doors to vehicles are a common occurrence that creates that crime of opportunity. Simply taking



an extra minute at the end of the day to make sure that all vehicle doors and windows are secure can save hours of hassle in the long run. Furthermore, secure items in the trunk or out of sight while your vehicle is visible to others.

Ensuring that the garage door is secure will also alleviate the threat of someone helping themselves to your belongings or camping out in your garage. Contacting individuals walking late at night helps us, as officers, know who is in the neighborhood as well as deterring possible criminals. By us simply being seen in a neighborhood can deter some crime.

As the winter months arrived we

began to patrol neighborhoods early in the morning. Many of us do not want to sit in a cold car to let it warm up; however, it is illegal as well as dangerous to leave your vehicle unattended while running. Even if you are just running in the house or the store for a minute; that minute could cost you your car and any belongings inside of it.

Approximately 50 percent of stolen cars have the keys in them. In the southern Colorado region over 3,000 cars were stolen last year due to leaving the vehicle unsecured with the keys in it. Simply staying with your car while it is warming up can save you a lot of hassle. In cooperation with the surrounding

agencies Manitou Springs Police Department helps educate the community with the Puffer campaign. Again by contacting the homeowners and vehicle owners and advising them of the dangers of “puffing” helps educate them. We also have flyers and pamphlets that we leave on vehicles where we are unable to contact the owners. As this is illegal we can also issue a citation.

As there has been a change in weather there has also been a change in our tourism customers. We conduct foot patrol throughout the day and evening hours to help educate people of some of the do’s and don’ts of Manitou Springs. We contact people throughout the day informing them of the parking rules, the smoking areas, where they can entertain others, current marijuana laws, our panhandling ordinances, and various other questions that come up during our foot patrol. This can make a huge impact in the downtown area.

Although we are patrolling the community and doing our best to prevent crime, it is always wise to be aware of your surroundings. Park in well lit areas, remember where you parked, lock your doors, keep your belongings hidden or on your person. Be safe and think smart.

Finance Department

The big news from the Finance Department is that in the fourth quarter of 2014, we finally achieved the ability to accept credit card payments over the Internet and over the phone. The City has partnered with a company called Xpress Bill Pay. Utilities customers can also, now, set up auto-pay through a credit card online and not have to worry about making that payment by the 21st of the month or face having a \$10 late fee being applied to their account on the 22nd if they forget. And, if you don’t want to receive the utilities bill postcard, you can go paperless and have your

utilities bill emailed to you. Go to www.xpressbillpay.com for more information. Please note if you have a parking ticket and want to pay that online, that would be through the third-party vendor the City uses to administer our parking program, Standard Parking. To find out more about that, please call 685-2549.

For those of you with dogs and/or cats, it’s time to renew their city licenses. The City issues dog and cat licenses based on the calendar year so they all have expired as of Dec. 31. The license tag changes every year to make it easy to spot if they are not current. This

year’s model is an attractive purple and round, round as a full moon. Make sure your pet has this latest fashion accessory.

Finally, just a reminder, the City adopted a step increase program for water and sewer fees a few years back so every January the fees increase a bit. If your January utilities bill seems a little higher, it’s because of that. The water “flat” rate (that’s the fee one pays every month to be connected to the City water pipes) for 3/4-inch water meters (which is the normal meter size most people have) is going from \$11.15 to \$12.05 a

month. The commodity charge (for actual water used, which is measured by the gallon) is going from \$4.50 to \$4.85 per 1,000 gallons, up to 14,999 gallons for residential. For sewer, the “flat” fee is going from \$12.65 to \$13.45 per month and the commodity charge is going from \$5.20 to \$5.50 per 1,000 gallons. I haven’t covered all the changes, just the ones that affect the most people.

For more details, please go to the City website: www.manitouspringsgov.com and click on the link under “New water and sewer rates” under “News and Announcements”.

Open Space Advisory Committee

The Manitou Springs Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) is a volunteer committee that advises the City of Manitou Springs on issues related to open space and trails. We are coming off a great 2014 and looking forward to an even better 2015.

In 2014 we accomplished the successful opening of the Iron Mountain Trail, a 2.3-mile trail connecting Pawnee Avenue to Crystal Park Road along the southern side of

the City (with absolutely stunning views), through collaboration with numerous wonderful volunteer groups and businesses. In addition, we were able to procure a \$75,000 GOCO grant to update our Open Space Master Plan.

That grant money will be utilized in 2015 to start the public process that will result in the new Master Plan. The original plan was finished in 1997 and has been the blueprint for Open Space acquisition for the City since its

implementation. This revised plan will be expanded to encompass open space, trails, and parks in the City of Manitou Springs and will provide the vision for OSAC’s mission for the next decade.

While at the initial stages of the overall planning – we are currently working toward the hiring of a consultant to help us define the approximately year-long public process – we will keep you informed on how you will be able to participate in

defining the future of Manitou’s open space and trails. We look forward to hearing what all of Manitou Springs has to say!

If you wish to learn more about what we do, please feel free to come to one of our monthly OSAC meetings on the 4th Monday of every month, at 7 p.m. in the City Council chambers in City Hall. Happy New Year – get out there and enjoy your open space and trails!

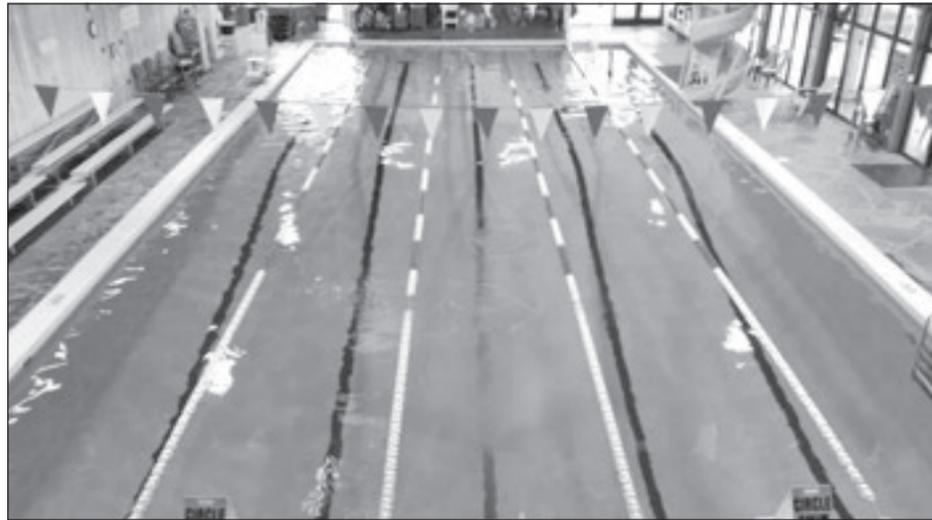
Manitou Pool and Fitness

By Roy Chaney
Aquatics Director

2014 was a good year for the pool and fitness center and we stayed consistent with 2013 attendance levels. We did not exceed last year's revenues, which was a record breaking year, but did well at \$177,000.

Below are the 2014 stats:

- Scholarships given=36
 - Lap swimmers=11,417
 - Aqua-aerobics=677
 - Public/Recreational swim=5,215
 - Swim lessons, adult & age group swim team, CPR, lifeguard, yoga etc.=25,419
 - Weight room/training=6,082
 - Pool parties/misc.=9,104
 - Total attendance=64,015 (Last year = 64,476)
- August and November were our slowest months with children



returning to school and due to the holidays. This year we saw a nice increase with our private pool parties as they were up 47 percent and weightroom use went up 4 percent.

We also closed Dec. 23 through Jan. 1 for some facility maintenance.

The following maintenance was

performed in-house:

- Painted pool coping
- Repaired deck holes and cracks
- Grouted the showers
- Painted front and back lobby
- Replaced the baseboard in the fitness room
- Cleaned filters and replaced

belts air exchangers

- Power cleaned the deck
- Deep clean of bathrooms.

Come check out some of our programs that include:

- American Red Cross private and group lessons
 - Aqua-aerobics
 - Lap swimming and open swim in our OZONE pool
 - Relax in our ozone hot tub
 - CPR, first aid and lifeguard training
 - Colorado Torpedoes age group competitive swim team
 - Beyond Fitness LLC. Provides weight training/fitness classes
 - Yoga and Core training classes
 - Pool parties with party room
- For more information on any of our programs or pool schedules, please call us at 685-9735 or visit us at www.manitoupool.com.

Parking Authority Board

By Neal Yowell, Chairman
Parking Authority Board

A while back I decided to go to the city to the east of Manitou Springs to meet some friends for dinner and a cocktail. I found a parking spot four minutes before 5 p.m. and paid the meter for an hour. I thought surely I would be fine for the four minutes before the 6 p.m. parking enforcement cutoff time.

After a great time with my friends I walked back to my vehicle to find that at 5:58 p.m. I received a parking ticket from the city to the east of us. So this is a friendly reminder that in the city of Manitou Springs parking on the streets is enforced from 8 a.m. till 5 p.m. and from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Wichita, Canon and Smischny parking lots during the winter season

with the three-hour free option Monday through Thursday on the streets. You still need to program the kiosk for the three-hour free option on the streets, which no other city offers.

I have also attended a sporting event in Denver as well as going to the Denver Civic Center. The event cost \$20 to park and parking in the lots in Denver ranged from \$27 per day to \$15 per day. Their spaces were extremely tight and vehicles were packed like sardines in a can. The experience reinforced how economically affordable Manitou Springs parking rates are in comparison to the outside world.

The Parking Authority Board in December said farewell to eight-year board member Spencer Wren. The dedication and input Spencer brought to the PAB was extremely valuable.

Not only the PAB, but I personally will miss Spencer's input and thank him for his eight years of dedication. We have two new board members since September and have available openings for interested residents. The Parking Authority Board meets the third Wednesday of each month at 5 p.m. in council chambers. Public input helps the board in gathering data as we make decisions and recommendations to City Council.

The Residential Parking Permit program has greatly relieved the congestion and stress to the residents along the Ruxton corridor. The implementation of managed parking in Manitou Springs was part of the 13-step plan to legalize the Manitou Springs Incline. Residents along the Washington corridor requested and, after input and consideration, have

also been designated a Residential Parking Permit area. Grand Avenue residents have requested RPP for their street. The first public meeting for that RPP will be held on Jan. 22 at 6 p.m. in city hall. The Duclo/Osage neighborhood has also requested RPP for their neighborhood and the process has begun for these residents as well.

Future goals of the PAB include a discounted smart card for residents to use. The pay by app feature seems to be working well with no negative feedback that the PAB has heard. The Parking Authority Board's long term goals include purchasing additional property for parking, helping finance the decking of existing lots and continuing and expanding the shuttle program.

Happy New Year to all!

Planning Commission

By Gil Price
Planning Commissioner

During 2015, a major objective of the Planning Department is the review and update of the city's zoning code. The zoning code provides rules and regulations for owning property or operating a business in our city. Decisions made by the Planning Department must be based upon this code. One would think that being on the Planning Commission for many years would give a commissioner a

good background of the code. However, the Planning Staff does such a great job presenting only the pertinent portions of the code to the commissioners in staff reports, there is rarely a need for the commissioners to visit a very well presented copy of the zoning code on-line.

Community Matters, Inc. has been contracted to make revisions to the zoning code. The company was introduced to the Planning Commissioners at the November meeting. The impressive presentation revealed to

me my lack of knowledge of the code. This review process will not only update our current zoning code but also provide a beneficial experience for Planning Commissioners and staff. As the review process for the zoning code evolves there will be various meetings to inform and receive input from the public. This provides the public an opportunity to be more familiar with the zoning code.

We recently had an applicant come before the Commission for a

variance to build a house on a large lot he had previously purchased. The applicant had spent quite a lot of time and money to bring his proposal to the Planning Commission. The conditions for the variance as stated in the zoning code were not met and the request was denied. Building a new home is one of the most important, and costly, decisions many people ever have to make. Before even buying a lot an applicant might find a trip to the Planning Department can avoid disappointment in the future.